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THE  
HEATHEN RELIGION

IN ITS

Popular and Symbolical Development.

BY

REV. JOSEPH B. GROSS.

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## DEDICATION.

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TO YOU,

WHOSE INTELLIGENCE RAISES YOU ABOVE VULGAR PREJUDICES;

WHOSE JUDGMENT IS ENLIGHTENÉD,

AND WHOSE OPINION MERITS RESPECT,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

ILLUSTRATING AN INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT BRANCH OF HUMAN

KNOWLEDGE AS DISPLAYED IN ALL AGES OF THE WORLD

IN CERTAIN STAGES OF MENTAL CULTURE,

AND DESERVING THE

PROFOUND ATTENTION OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SCHOLAR,

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## INTRODUCTION.

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PERHAPS on no subject within the ample range of human knowledge, have so many fallacious ideas been propagated as upon that of the gods and the worship of heathen antiquity. Nothing but a shameful ignorance, a pitiable prejudice, or the most contemptible pride, which denounces all investigations as a useless or a criminal labor, when it must be feared that they will result in the overthrow of preëstablished systems of faith, or the modification of long cherished principles of science, can have thus misrepresented the theology of heathenism, and distorted — nay, caricatured — its forms of religious worship. It is time that posterity should raise its voice in vindication of violated truth, and that the present age should learn to recognize in the hoary past at least a little of that common sense of which *it* boasts with as much self-complacency, as if the prerogative of reason was the birthright only of modern times.

In our researches into the religion of the heathens, a just regard to truth requires that a proper distinction should be made between its successive stages of development, as well as between the different classes of society by whom it was professed. In the earlier ages of the world, the universe could not be contemplated by the untutored mind of man, as the sole production of a Supreme Being, as he was incapable of reasoning *a posteriori*; and it was reserved for the *Novum Organum* of a Lord Bacon, in more recent

times, to point out the inductive way, which leads *through nature up to nature's God*. All the objects and phenomena in the visible world were then not only considered to be animate and preternatural, but also to be endowed with divinity, and as being either good or bad; and therefore propitious or adverse to the interests of mankind: all nature teemed with *fetiches*, and resounded with oracular communications. Polytheism and idolatry were the immediate and necessary consequences of these erroneous ideas; and they who best understood how to interpret the mysteries of nature, or were the most devout and zealous in the observance of the duties which they enjoined, were by common consent promoted to the rank of priests—the consecrated mediators between the gods and their votaries. At a more advanced stage of moral and intellectual culture, this theological system of the infantine mind—the pantheism of the primeval ages, was subjected to a severe logical scrutiny, and metaphysical induction at last predicated the existence of a Supreme Being as the author and governor of all things.

From this period, the gods of the priests and sages resolved themselves into the attributes and manifestations of the Eternal, and henceforth ceased to exist as independent beings; while in the popular creed, connived at by the better informed, they continued to enjoy their ancient prerogatives, and to maintain their accustomed influence. Different names distinguished the Supreme Being, according to the various nations and languages among whom he was recognized and adored. Thus among the Egyptians, he was denominated Knēph; among the Persians, Zeruane Akerene; among the Hindoos, Parabrahma; among the Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans, Chronos or Saturn—the Absolute in the fathomless immensity of time; and among the Scandinavians, Surtur, or the God in *statu abscondito*. The attributes and cosmic manifestations of the Supreme Being, were personified or considered as so many gods or divine hypostases; for those an-

cient metaphysicians seemed to have reasoned somewhat after this manner: "The Supreme Being has attributes or qualities which collectively make up his being; hence, as he would not be the Supreme Being if any of these accessories were wanting, it follows that each one of them must be the Supreme Being, because each one includes or requires all the rest to complete the idea of such a being." The first evolutions or attributal manifestations of the Supreme Being became the parents or prolific source of other evolutions; and thus there were as many divinities as there were distinct categories of qualities or powers in the physical and spiritual worlds. These powers or qualities were further contemplated as masculine or feminine, or as begetting and conceiving and bearing. Thus ether, the atmosphere, light, fire, the sun, winds and storms, fear, virtue, etc., were gods; and the moon, the earth, the night, the morning, the seasons of spring, summer, and autumn, wisdom, faith, justice, etc., were goddesses.

These emanated divinities, or God manifested in the laws and phenomena of the universe and their worship, constituted the religious system of the civilized societies of antiquity, and had the sanction of the State: it comprised the transition state between the crude religious notions of the primitive ages, and the elaborate metaphysical creed of the initiated into the mysteries of God, of creation, and of providence. Among the deities who thus governed the world, were also its architects, or demiurgusses; as Jupiter, Osiris, Ormuzd, and Brahma: Surtur, or the God in *statu-abscondito* — the hidden God, introduced the creation of the world himself, as may be seen in the Scandinavian cosmogony, after which he consigned to Odin and his two brothers its further development and completion. The theogonic and theological systems of the ancient Persians, as far as Ormuzd and his congeneric divinities are concerned, may serve as a type of the general character of the intermedial religious creed of the ancients. Ormuzd — light, goodness, in whom are united the three primordial, ethe-

real elements of light, fire, and water, emanated from Zeruane Akerene, who created him by simply pronouncing the logos or living word Honover: *enohe verihe* — I am, or be it. "Ormuzd," writes Blackwell,\* "created the universe by pronouncing the living word Honover; first his own abode of light, Sakhter, and then the Genii, or deities of Light, in three classes. The first class consists of the seven Amshaspands, Ormuzd himself being included in the number; the others are Bahman, the genius of the region of light; Ardibehesht, the genius of ethereal fire; Shariver, the genius of metals; Sapandomad, the creatrix, or rather source, of fruitfulness; Khordad, the genius of time; and Amerdad, the tutelary genius of the vegetable world, and of flocks and herds. In the second class are the twenty-seven Izeds, male and female. These are the elementary deities, as Khorshid, the sun; Mah, the moon; Tashter, the dog-star, also the deity of rain; Rapitan, the deity of heat, etc.; and were probably those worshipped before the popular belief was not only thus reduced into a system like the Scandinavian, but refined to a high degree of intellectuality by the philosophical and ethical doctrines ingrafted on it. The third class consists of the Fervers: these are the vivifying principles of nature, the ideal types of the material universe, corresponding in a great measure to the *ideas* of Plato. In heaven they keep watch against Ahriman and his host; on earth they combat against the Genii of evil. Every one, even Ormuzd himself, has his Ferver. An Iranite has thus constantly by his side his ideal type, or uncorrupted immaterial image, to guide him through life and preserve him from evil."

It was the symbolical representation of this intermedial theological system that so extensively engrossed the attention, and elicited the ingenuity and skill of the *hiero-artists* of antiquity. Nor

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\* A Critical Examination of the Leading Doctrines of the Scandinavian System of Mythology, in his Edition of Mallet's Northern Antiquities.



was the labor bestowed upon this branch of human speculation vain, or unworthy the genius of mankind, as it promoted the interests of science; developed arts, the perfection of which modern times have not succeeded in surpassing; illustrated the character, the relations, and the functions of the gods; and responded, at least to some extent, to the moral wants and spiritual aspirations of the people of that age.

To explain the apparent enigma in the moral and physical world, of the existence of evil in antagonism with goodness, the heathen sages, especially those among the Oriental nations, founded a *theodikē*,\* which still occupies a conspicuous place in the religious creeds of a numerous class of mankind, and which is now, as it was then, regarded as a satisfactory solution of this abstruse cosmic and psychological problem, as well as a most effectual vindication of the character of God: it is the doctrine of *fallen spirits*, who either sinned through their own spontaneity, or were tempted into rebellion by others. Loki, among the Scandinavians; Ahri-man, among the Persians; Moissure, among the Hindoos; Typhon, among the Egyptians, etc., led the van in this retrogressive and diabolical movement.

A brief outline of the nature and actions of a few of these princes of evil may suffice to illustrate the doctrine of the *kakothēoi* among the ancients. In the Edda, according to the Northern Antiquities, Loki is described as the grand contriver of deceit and frauds; as the calumniator of the gods; and as the reproach of both gods and men. His figure is represented to be very comely, while his mind is so depraved, that he surpasses all mortals in the arts of craft and perfidy. Though Loki is so beautiful a devil, no one presumes to render divine honors to the fallen god. Sin is

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\* The justification of God on account of the evil which exists in the world. Can there be virtue or moral goodness without an ethical combat? Reason and experience answer—No!

prolific, and this Norse-personification of the evil principle is said to be the parent of a numerous progeny as malignant as himself. After order and harmony had reigned for a long time in the world of spirits, Moisaure, the Hindoo satan, grew envious of Brahma's resplendent light, and, aided by a prodigious number of inferior evil spirits, boldly renounced his fealty to Brahma. In vain did the god of light and truth endeavor to instil better principles into their debased minds, and, if possible, to bring about a reconciliation. The rebel host, bent upon the annihilation of the rival empire, resorted to arms—the last expedient of tyrants—and began to wage a fierce and unrelenting war against Brahma and his faithful adherents. To chastise their insolent audacity, Siva, the third person in the Hindoo trinity, hurled them from heaven into Onderah, the abyss of darkness. Here they repented of their evil deeds, and means for their final restitution were provided; under what conditions, and with what success, will be seen when we come to speak of future judgment.

The Greeks and other nations had not only their Titans and giants, but also their good and evil genii or demons, who belonged to the train or category of the inferior gods. If we reflect that among the ancients knowledge was not so universally diffused as it is at the present day, but that, on the contrary, it was confined to the few whose social position or professional duties encouraged or demanded its acquisition, we may venture to assert that the symbolical garniture under which the gods and the religion of antiquity were represented, was generally either little understood or erroneously interpreted by the multitude; and that even many among the better informed laymen could give but a sorry account of the evidences upon which their hope or their faith was based. As long as the interests of the priesthood were properly guarded, and a laudable spirit of emulation or of public usefulness prompted its members to scientific researches, there was no danger that the key which alone could unlock the mysteries which enveloped the

religious faith and ritual service of the heathens, would be lost, or that religion itself should cease to flourish. Such, history informs us, has been the case. In the course of ages, however, a different fate awaited the indefatigable founders of the vast and stately structure which composed the intermedial theological system of the heathen church. Now oppressed by tyranny or dissolved in sloth and luxury; involved in the devastating and disorganizing tendencies of repeated and protracted wars, perhaps carried off as captives from their altars, their gods, and their people, in the barbaric train of some haughty conqueror; infidelity gradually infecting the semi-enlightened upper ranks of society, and generating the numerous vices incident to an irreligious state of the mind, the integrity of the public system of religion became seriously affected; piety rapidly declined, and faith lost its accustomed stimulus. They who had devised and perpetuated through a long course of ages the intricate theories of physical and metaphysical personifications and allegory, and had so successfully applied to them the ingenious system of hieroglyphical representations and symbolical interpretations, at last lost or undervalued the knowledge of their science, ceased to exist as a distinct or privileged body in the social organization, or could no longer stem the tide of corruption that everywhere threatened to overwhelm an institution which required the combined wisdom and power of its founders, and the unimpaired faith and zeal of the people, to preserve it inviolate. Need we marvel that the ignorant multitude, no longer guided by the voice, or instructed by the example of the priests of former times; deprived of the sympathy of the higher classes, or vitiated through the corrupting influence of their licentious manners, should eventually mistake the sign for the object which it was intended to symbolize, and once more—as was the case in primeval ages—literally worship *wood and stone* as the *ne plus ultra* of all that remained to them of their faith and of their gods? Need any be surprised that under such

unpropitious circumstances, the neglected and downtrodden votaries of heathenism should have committed all kinds of pious follies and religious extravagances, and at last brought merited disgrace upon the religion which they professed?

Impartial justice demands that we should not estimate the merits of an institution by its corruptions and abuses, but by its pristine and normal character. The history of the Christian church, an institution still in its infancy, incontestably shows how easily the most superstitious and the most flagrant corruptions may gradually insinuate themselves into the faith and practice of the professors of even the most holy and Godlike religion; and how unfair it would be to reproach the Christian religion with the improprieties and follies of its disciples. While therefore some palliation is allowed to be due to the imperfections in the Christian church, and a distinction is to be carefully made between the doctrines of the gospel and the lives of the Christians, let us but judge heathenism on the same discriminating principle; make some allowance for the age and the state of human society in which it flourished or decayed, and we shall do justice to truth, justice to ourselves, and justice to Divine Providence.

FAYETTE, February, 1854.

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NOTE. — In the preparation of the present work, the author has had occasion to make extensive use of the researches of some of his predecessors, to whom reference could not always be made with convenience, and whose services to him therefore claim a proper recognition in this place. Accordingly, he gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Professor Creuzer's voluminous and erudite work under the title of the *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker besonders der Griechen*; to Doctor Mone's *Geschichte des Heidenthums im Nördlichen Europa*; and to the authors of the *Northern Antiquities*, especially to J. A. Blackwell, Esq.

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B O O K I.

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THE HEATHEN RELIGION

IN ITS

POPULAR DEVELOPMENT.



## SECTION I.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN THE HUMAN  
MIND, AND THE LIGHT IN WHICH RELIGIOUS  
OBJECTS ARE CONTEMPLATED.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena of the human race, is the universal existence of religious ideas: a belief in something supernatural and divine, and a worship corresponding to it. The account of historians and travellers, purporting that they have met with savage tribes or barbaric nations, who were utterly destitute of all traces of religion, must be regarded as the result of superficial observation or hasty inference, and which cannot, therefore, be admitted as an exception to the general rule, until it shall have been corroborated by future investigations. To what cause, then, is this decided religious element, this predominant creed of mankind, in a sacred principle or spiritual power that is everywhere pervading and controlling the universe, to be ascribed? Shallow theorists are not wanting, who have advanced the puerile doctrine that the heathen religion owes its origin and influence in human

society to the artful devices of selfish and heartless demagogues, who, it seems, were as skilful and unscrupulous in the manufacture of the gods, as they were successful in making slaves of their unsuspecting dupes. "Not thus," cries the self-conceited infidel; "priestcraft has practised its juggling tricks, and the world has been made to believe a lie, and to worship a phantom!" Such hypotheses are too evidently ludicrous to require a labored refutation, and I need but state that though religion may be recognized and developed, it can never be produced or originated by man; while, at the same time, it is just as natural for him to be impressed with religious convictions, as it is to think or to utter articulate sounds. Carlyle, having remarked that quackery and imposition have indeed fearfully abounded in the latter and corrupt period of the pagan religion, adds: "But quackery was never the originating influence in such things; it was not the health and life of such things, but their disease, the sure precursor of their being about to die! Let us never forget this. It seems to me a most mournful hypothesis, that of quackery giving birth to any faith, even in savage men. Quackery gives birth to nothing; gives death to all," etc. Some, on the other hand, have not hesitated to assert a supernatural revelation as the primeval source of all the diversified forms of religion that have prevailed upon the earth; and that the knowledge of such a relation, communicated to an individual, or a people, has been gradually and successively transmitted to the whole human family, through the ductile and ever-widening channel of tradition. This opinion, though

supported by an array of respectable names, is untenable, because it is destitute of the least historical basis; and because, also, the Apostle Paul, whose authority in a question of this kind no one will presume to dispute, lays down the following axiom in direct contradiction to the theory of a revelation antecedent to a religious manifestation among mankind: "For," says the inspired minister of the Son of God, "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." In a more extended sense, religion may be properly considered as the result of supernatural endowment, inasmuch as our development towards perfection, in which the religious element forms an integral and essential part, is a revelation, of which the fertile germ was originally implanted in the human breast by the Creator: this is a standing, an innate, and a growing revelation, responding to the apocalypse of God in nature, and manifesting itself among all men in all ages. It is the revelation to which the sacred writer, already referred to, thus adverts in his epistle to the Romans: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifested in them; for God hath showed it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," etc. Here we have a proof of the revelation of God in nature, adapted to the religious faculties

of man, stamped upon his soul by the Deity, and designed to be the recipient organs of divine communications, through the laws and phenomena of the external world; and it is thus that man ascends "through nature up to nature's God." It is in this manner that nature becomes the oracle of God, and that her ceaseless and constantly augmenting instructions, gradually impress a more noble and perfect image of the Creator upon the soul: a process of human development which is the common birth-right of our race. Of this apocalypse of the Supreme Being to mankind, through the medium of his handiworks, Pope thus speaks in the following pithy and elegant stanza:—

"Nor think, in nature's state they blindly trod;  
The state of nature was the reign of God."

Hence the incipient part of religion, or religion considered genetically, is to be imputed to nature, and, of course, to God, its omnipotent and adorable author; but viewed in its subjective form, or as the fruit of human spontaneity, religion owes its reflex origin, its practically more estimable part, to the reproductive energies of the human mind. No one who has any knowledge of the subject, will deny that religion is as materially affected by climate and the genius of nations, as language or civil institutions. Nor can we overlook the modifying and controlling influences which different degrees of civilization, the character of the soil, the quality of the food, and the style of dress; the amusements and political relations; the state of education and of the arts; a warlike spirit, or the cultivation of peace and

the enjoyment of domestic tranquillity; an idle, erratic life, or the steady and peaceful prosecution of productive industry, must exercise over the nature, the tendency, and the importance of the religious ideas, which distinguish the individual or the nation. "Hence the attempt," remarks Kaiser, in his *biblische Theologie*, "everywhere to find the same mythological divinities, would be futile, and no less incongruous than if one should refer the epic poems of Homer and Virgil, relating to Troy, to the Jericho of the Jews, or the Avaris of the Egyptians." A question of some interest is the inquiry, What causes, objectively considered, mainly excite the religious faculties of the soul, and inspire acts of devotion? *Timor fecit deos*, is an adage of classic celebrity, yet it must be received with some qualification; for though the terrible manifestations of nature, as thunder and lightning, earthquakes, tempests, etc., impress the untutored mind with sentiments of the most intense alarm and anxiety, and suggest to it the necessity or the propriety of a propitiatory offering to the offended or destructive god, they are by no means the only excitors of the religious principle, but constitute a mere, though important unit, in a series of causes resulting in the same great end. Such, for instance, are all those striking displays in the external world, which create wonder, surprise, or aversion; fill the soul with delight or gratitude; overwhelm it with a sense of its insignificance and helplessness; carry conviction of guilt and danger to a slumbering conscience; or excite a feeling of admiration for the romantic and the beautiful. All such, and similar outward causes, conspire



to stimulate the soul into a genial sympathy; to call forth in it the reflections and emotions which will insure its religious culture; and to bring it into a constantly increasing proximity to God. Viewed subjectively, we may enumerate among the religious susceptibilities of our race, the human character contemplated in its attribute of perfectibility; our various intellectual faculties and moral sentiments; the principle of self-preservation; the desire of knowledge, and the use of language; the social propensity, and the natural and irrepressible instinct to be happy.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE LIGHT IN WHICH RELIGIOUS OBJECTS ARE CONTEMPLATED.

THE religious history of our race, uninfluenced by a direct revelation, bears very striking evidence to the fact that man, in the infancy of his mind, and the absence of a wholesome experience, is prone to contemplate most of the objects and phenomena of external nature, in the light of *fetiches*\* a phrase

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\* Kaiser, the author above designated, derives the term *fetich* from the Portuguese *fetisso*, an oracle or revelation of the gods, and makes it synonymous with *fatum* or fate, which is deduced from *fāri*, to speak, and signifies an oracle,† as also the order and

† *Fatum est quod dii fentur.*



which at once implies an idol and an oracle, and which denotes something that enchants or charms, not something that is enchanted or charmed, as is sometimes erroneously taught, and which — forcibly attracting the attention, inspires man with sentiments of religious awe, while it suggests to him the propriety of a suitable homage; and therefore the part which he acts in this sacred drama, may likewise be denominated a fascination or charm. For his childish theory of physical nature, plainly premises an extraordinary reciprocal influence between the laws and manifestations of the external world and himself. The objects and phenomena of nature being generally regarded by him, not only as animate and sentient, but also as endowed with thought, passion, and the gift of speech; and as being either of a beneficent or of a hostile character. According to his unpractised eyes, the visible universe resembles, to some extent, at least, the human microcosm. Thus, the stars are the eyes of heaven, or the god Uranus, and while darkness shrouds the earth, they act the part of sentries in the celestial dome, and

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series of causes observable in the universe, and which are commonly called the course of nature. Hence, fetich, fate, and fairy = an enchantress, are correlative terms.\* When the gods are represented in pagan mythology as subject to fate, the fact is to be regarded as a great and beautiful truth, as will appear more fully hereafter; for being virtually intended as the mere symbols of the manifestations of the divine attributes and character, as displayed in the visible world, they are of course subject to those laws which God has seen fit to impose both upon himself and upon every part of the vast universe.

\* The Latin *fabula* or fable, is also a branch of this family of words.

keenly survey the actions of mankind. Lamps, too, have been recognized in them, which, it is presumed, are lighted up in the evening, and extinguished at the approach of day. The moon has apparently a human physiognomy; is a female deity, and named Luna. She is believed to be in a pleasant humor as long as she presents her lustrous face towards the earth, but when she veils it under an eclipse, she is angry at her votaries, and they have reason to dread her wrath while she is unpropitiated.

Columbus and his crew being no longer supplied with food by the natives as heretofore, and threatened with starvation, the wily discoverer of a new world concerted his measures in accordance with this infantine faith, and, announcing to the simple aborigines of Santa Gloria the approaching eclipse of the moon, represented this phenomenon as the symbol of the severe indignation which the God of the Spaniards felt against them, on account of their refusal to furnish the invaders of their country, and the despoilers of their liberty, with the necessaries of life. The artifice had its desired effect, and so great was the consternation of the poor Indians when the predicted lunar obscuration took place, that they brought provisions in the greatest abundance, from all parts of the country to the treacherous strangers, of whose celestial origin they had but recently had some well founded doubts, praying only that their dutiful behavior might merit the forgiveness of the offended Divinity.

Beside these instances in point, I may further remark, in illustration of this topic, that the wind moans or howls; the stream leaps or runs; the tree

nods or beckons; the rains are tears, which heaven, in sorrow or in anger, sheds upon the earth; and the fantastic cloud-forms are so many ghostly warriors, ominously hovering over the human domicile. Besides, the fire bites: its flames are tongues, which — like the serpent-locks of Medusa — encircle and devour their victim. Hail is the algid missile of some shaggy or sullen frost-king, the Joetun Rime, for example, in Scandinavian mythology. The earth is a mother, producing and nourishing an innumerable progeny, and hence called Ceres, or Alma Nostra. Here we find not only impersonation, but also apotheosis; and the reason is, that man, more sentient than rational, is restricted in the unfolding process of his inner life, to the intercourse with the objects of sense, unable as yet to rise to abstract ideas. “You remember,” writes the author *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, “that fancy of Aristotle’s, of a man who had grown to maturity in some dark distance, and was brought, on a sudden, into the upper air to see the sun rise. What would his wonder be,” says the philosopher, “his rapt astonishment at the sight we daily witness with indifference! With the free, open sense of a child, yet with the ripe faculty of a man, his whole heart would be kindled by that sight, he would discern it well to be godlike, his soul would fall down in worship before it. Now, just such a childlike greatness was in the primitive nations. The first Pagan Thinker among rude men, the first man that began to think, was precisely the child-man of Aristotle. Simple, open as a child, yet with the depth

and strength of a man. Nature had, as yet, no name to him; he had not yet united under a name the infinite variety of sights, sounds, shapes, and motions, which we now collectively name universe, nature, or the like, and so with a name dismiss it from us. To the wild, deep-hearted man, all was yet new, unveiled under names or formulas; it stood naked, flashing in on him there, beautiful, awful, unspeakable. Nature was to this man, what to the Thinker and Prophet it forever is, *preternatural*. This green, flowery, rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas; that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain: what is it? Aye, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all. It is not by our superior insight, that we escape the difficulty; it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our want of insight. It is by *not* thinking that we cease to wonder at it. Hardened round us, incasing wholly every notion we form, is a wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere *words*. We call that fire of the black thunder-cloud 'electricity,' and lecture learnedly about it, and grind the like of it out of glass and silk: but *what* is it? What made it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great, deep, sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle;

wonderful, inscrutable, *magical*, and more to whomsoever will *think* of it."

In the animal kingdom, especially, primeval man presumes he sees creatures endowed with thought and reflection similar to himself, and now and then imagines he discovers among them traces of a wisdom more than human. An instance of this kind, mythology records under the name of the bird of Minerva, or the owl, which it may be supposed, attained to this ornithological preëminence, on account of the superior gravity of its demeanor, and the deep and ominous tones in which it prognosticates the approaching meteorological changes in the atmosphere. The Indian apologizes to the bear, the heart of which he has pierced with the fatal arrow, on account of the deplorable necessity which compelled him to commit so cruel a deed, and expresses the fond hope that his sable victim will not cherish any ill-feelings towards his unfortunate slayer. The sonorous and often mournful lowing of the bull, is deemed significant of a divine presence, and the unsuspecting brute is suddenly promoted to the dignity of a fetich or an idol, while his name is piously enrolled in the list of the gods. The serpent, "more subtle," according to Moses, the Hebrew lawgiver, "than any beast of the field," has had a place from time immemorial in the motley pantheon of heathenism, and has been worshipped either for its benignant or its obnoxious qualities. The polished Greeks paid their homage to Æsculapius, under the form of a serpent, and the sacred snake of the negroes of Whida, owes its deification to the circumstance that it appeared to them at the favorable



moment when they had gained a decisive victory over the people of Ardra.\*

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\* Captain Walter M. Gibson, the account of whose sufferings and romantic adventures among the Dutch and Malays, is still fresh in the recollection of the public, in an intensely interesting discourse before the American Geographical and Statistical Society, in the city of New York, and in the latter part of the preceding year, among other interesting statements, gave the following account of a most singular race of people residing in the south-eastern part of Sumatra, and known as the Orang Kooboos, or Brown Men of Sumatra. Osmin, an independent prince of the island, "called them," says the Captain, "*tai orang*, the ordure of men." He said that they were born as the lowest of slaves, and this had been the case for hundreds of generations, inasmuch as they were the descendants of slaves and burden-carriers of the army of Alexander. I found them generally called "hamba or hoodak Iskandar"—the slaves of Alexander. It is well known that numberless traditions of Alexander the Great, of "Dou'l Karnain,"—"the two-horned," prevail throughout Sumatra, as well as in the Asiatic Continent, etc. He adds: "I was informed by a fellow-prisoner at Weltevreden, by one Captain Van Woor-den, who had been four years commanding at the small post of Lahat, in the interior of Sumatra, and who had had frequent opportunities to observe the Orang Kooboos, both male and female, sit round a buluh batang, or species of bamboo, that attains to a great size, and would all in concert, as many as could, strike their heads repeatedly against the trunk of the tree, and utter some rude, grunting ejaculations; this he observed took place whenever any one, or all of the band got hurt, or received any special gratification, but mostly when injured. Now, it is well known that a large portion of the semi-civilized, semi-pagan Sumatrans, believe that in the enormous tufts of the buluh batang, as well as in the marringin tree, there exist widadiri dawas and rakshashas, or good and evil supernatural beings; and, what is remarkable, that throughout Sumatra, all the beings of their pagan mythology are of the feminine gender. I have heard described by their *orang menyanyec*, or pantunverse-singers, some most

ravishing pictures of the widadiri, or good wood-nymphs of the buluh batang.\* “The Chingalas of Ceylon,” writes the author of *A Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos, etc.*, “worship a tree called Bogaha, in the form of which they believe that Budda was manifested. — *Ezourvedam*, vol. ii. p. 47. Under this tree, they light lamps and place images. — *Delaport's Voyages*, vol. iii. p. 395.”

\*New York Universe.

## SECTION II.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, REGARDED  
AS DEIFIED, AND THE WORSHIP WHICH  
IS BESTOWED UPON THEM.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, REGARDED  
AS DEIFIED.

WHEREVER the universe displays its prolific empire, there may be found the religion and the gods of the heathen. Upon, above, or beneath the earth; in the ærial and empyreal heavens; on the snow-capt mountain, and in the fathomless abyss; in the verdant glen, the shady grove, or the crystal fountain: all nature teems with divinities—the symbols of God made manifest in his works, and earth, heaven, and hades, are filled with the diversified and multitudinous objects of religious worship. On this interesting topic, Kaiser makes the following judicious remarks. Speaking of primeval man, whose vivid imagination reigns supreme among the faculties of his soul, he adds: “To conceive the surrounding objects of the world under the idea of a totality, he



is incapable. Like a child he stares at the novel and strange sights which he beholds, and startles with surprise at the various sounds, which greet his ears in mystic strains. His mind is powerfully affected by the different phases which the earth assumes at each successive revolution of the seasons, and he contemplates with a mingled feeling of fear and wonder, the alternate vicissitudes of growth and decay, of life and death, to which her cherished offspring are doomed. Especially is his slumbering attention aroused by whatever is distinguished for its lustre, its velocity, its huge size, or prodigious strength. Hence the first piece of wood, a stone, an animal, a star, which impresses his imagination with the idea of the preternatural, and seems either to promise protection or to demand obedience, his excited and overwhelmed feelings prompt him to elevate to the rank of a god, or to recognize in it at least a fetich, animated by a spirit or demon, and proclaiming oracles to mankind."

The gods, it may be observed here, are of different sexes, and stand related to each other according to the usual tables of consanguinity common among mortals. They, of course, "marry, and are given in marriage." Some of the celestial families, as may readily be supposed, are more powerful and influential than others, precisely as is the case among men; for the gods are divided agreeably to their rank and dominion, into superior and inferior orders, and rise gradually in power and dignity from the diminutive Penates of the domestic hearth, or the *black stone* of the Arabs, to the lofty and severe majesty of the Olympian Jupiter. Not only every division, but

often, even, every individual object in the visible creation, has had its presiding genius or reigning god; and therefore the religion of the heathen, in its more primitive form, is rather pantheistic than polytheistic. In his mythological researches, as it appears from his "Northern Antiquities," M. Mallet arrived at results which are strikingly cognate to the facts here laid down. "Each element," he writes, "was, according to the faith of primeval man, under the guidance of some being peculiar to it. The earth, the water, the fire, the air, the sun, moon, and stars, had each their respective divinity. The trees, forests, rivers, mountains, rocks, winds, thunder, and tempests, had the same; and merited, on that score, a religious worship, which, at first, could not be directed to the visible object, but to the intelligence with which it was animated."

The ancients, and especially the Athenians, paid particular attention to the winds, and offered them sacrifices, as to deities, under the name of Venti. The four principal winds were, the south-east, or *Eurus*, represented as a young man flying with great impetuosity, and often appearing in a playsome and wanton humor; the south wind, or *Auster*, that appeared as an old man with gray hair, a gloomy countenance, a head covered with clouds, a sable vesture, and dusky wings: he is the dispenser of rain, and of all heavy showers; the west wind, or *Zephyrus*, that is described as the mildest of all the windy deities. He is young and gentle, and his lap is filled with vernal flowers. He married the goddess *Flora*, with whom he is said to have enjoyed the most perfect felicity. As to the north wind, or *Boreas*, fame

has stigmatized this divinity with the reproach to be invariably rough and chilly. He is the father of snow, hail, and tempests, and is always represented surrounded by impenetrable clouds. The other gods, Solanus, Africus; Corus, and Aquilo, who also belonged to this category, were of inferior note, except Æolus, who was emphatically the *storm-king*, whatever claim others might advance to this distinction.

Perhaps it will puzzle the curious reader to understand how nearly every constituent part of the universe could be separately or collectively deified, and yet at the same time, be under a foreign or superior deific influence. The solution of the problem is not difficult. The human mind in its ascending struggles, gradually perceived the impropriety of ascribing to an almost unlimited extent, the attributes and functions peculiar only to gods properly so called, to the various objects and powers of nature; and it therefore wisely contented itself by assigning to many of them a secondary rank, or a mere passive agency, and placing them under the tutelar care and supervision of the superior powers. In this way only could they satisfactorily explain to themselves many of the wonderful and mysterious phenomena and influences, which everywhere struck their attention with awe or astonishment, alarmed their fears, or filled their souls with hope and joy, and essentially affected their weal or woe. Instead, therefore, of continuing to confer divinity on the isolated tree, as had formerly been the practice, the collective forest had a god impost upon it under the comprehensive appellation of Pan: a bearded, horned, and cloven-footed divinity, in the similitude of the goat,

and constituting the embryo of the future Jupiter and Pater-Deus of the Greeks and Romans; and the ocean, instead of being any longer parcelled out among a multitude of supreme local regents, was intrusted to the powerful trident of Neptune, who was, however, chiefly recognized and adored by merchants and mariners, whose lives and fortunes were mainly confided to his vigilant care. If ever he did enjoy the enviable prerogative of absolute godhead, the Egyptian *apis* ceased at last to be a deity in his own right, and became the mere vehicle and repository of divinity. Ultimately he figured no longer even in this perhaps humiliating capacity, and yet his mythological worth and significance rather increased than diminished; for he was now the symbol of important physical facts as well as profound truths in natural theology. How supremely absurd is the idea advanced by some modern writers, whose bigotry and prejudices exercise a far more powerful sway over their minds than the love of truth and the interests of science, that the people of the Nile, in a high state of civilization, especially the priests and sages, renowned for their varied and profound wisdom, should have perpetrated the unparalleled stupidity of making a god of a creature inferior to the least of his worshippers!

## CHAPTER II.

## THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS.

IN the worship of the gods, during the primitive ages, mankind sought to present to them such gifts—in conjunction with their prayers, as were calculated to gratify the senses, and to create those pleasing emotions in the soul which they themselves derived from their enjoyment. Besides, the gods were at one time, and by the ignorant in every age, really supposed to need food and drink, at least to some extent, as well as their votaries. Moreover, if it was not good etiquette to appear before a person of high rank, especially in Oriental countries, without a suitable present, how could a worshipper of the immortal gods dare to enter into their august presence without some costly gifts as the testimonials of their good-will and unshaken devotion? No doubt self-interest no less than motives of sincere attachment, occasionally suggested the propriety of tendering an offering to the superior powers, in which case it was synonymous with a bribe, offered under the semblance of religious zeal. Nomades have always prized the firstlings of their flocks as the most desirable gifts for the gods, while hunters and fishermen offer to them some of the choicest specimens of the chase, or of the finny spoils of the stream, and the husbandman lays upon their altars various samples of the fruits of the earth, or tenders to them the savory morsels of a fatted beast. In-

cense, too, as a grateful perfume to the olfactories of the immortal powers, was burned in honor of them; and it is stated that at a single festival of the god Belus, in Babylon, one thousand pounds of the delightful drug were consumed in the luxurious service of that deity. Libations, likewise, formed a part of the sacrificial ritual, and no true worshipper presumed to touch the cup with his lips before the presiding divinity had had his share. In the earliest ages, the gods, it may be supposed, got treated only to water, but it was not long before the shepherd could give them a draught of milk, and while the Greek and Roman deities enjoyed their nectar or their wine, Odin, the Scandinavian, sipped his beer in Valhalla. If we can rely upon a Grecian myth, the most ancient offerings were derived from the vegetable kingdom. Lycaon, the savage son of Pelasgus, and first king of Arcadia, polluted the altar of Zeus with the blood of a child; but Cecrops, the Egyptian, directed cakes alone to be offered to this god at Athens. The greatest diversity, both in the style and the expense of the sacrificial service, has distinguished the devotion or the resources of the heathen. While at one time some fruit, a cake, a small piece of aromatic gum, or a fragrant herb, was deemed sufficiently demonstrative of a pious zeal, at another, a hecatomb was considered necessary to illustrate the importance of the occasion, to satisfy the claim of the god, or to express the rank and wealth of the offerers. Even so sumptuous and honorable an offering was now and then despised as inadequate to do justice to the gods, or as too mean fully to display the extraordinary piety of man, and a hundred



lions, a hundred eagles, etc., were required to satisfy the lofty devotion of an emperor — *sacrificium imperatorium*. There were also votive offerings and consecrated gifts — *anathemata*, which were hung or laid up in the temples of the gods.

The Persian mode of paying homage to their deities, confirmed by undeviating custom, "Is," writes Herodotus, according to the version of Beloe, "to sacrifice to them without altars or fire, libations, or instrumental music, garlands, or consecrated cakes; but every individual, as he wishes to sacrifice to any particular divinity, conducts his victim to a place made clean for the purpose, and makes his invocation or his prayers with a tiara enriched generally with myrtle. The suppliant is not permitted to implore blessings on himself alone; his whole nation, and particularly his sovereign, have a claim to his prayers, himself being necessarily comprehended with the rest. He proceeds to divide his victim into several minute parts, which, when boiled, he places on the most delicate verdure he can find, giving the preference to trefoil. When things are thus prepared, one of the magi, without whose presence no sacrifice is deemed lawful, stands up and chants the primeval origin of the gods, which they suppose to have a sacred and mysterious influence. The worshipper, after this, takes with him, for his own use, such parts of the flesh as he thinks proper."

The animal kingdom has always supplied large contributions to the banquets of the gods. The victim,\*

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\* "The beast to be sacrificed," says Kennett, in his *Roman Antiquities*, "if it was of the larger sort, used to be marked on



which is often appropriately decorated for the solemn occasion, must be selected with scrupulous care; for it is required to be free of all blemishes and diseases. Every thing being prepared, according to the Roman ritual, for example, it is led to the place of sacrifice, preceded by the officiating priest, clothed in a white robe free from *spots and figures*: white was a color in which the gods took especial delight. A libation of wine is then poured upon the altar, and a solemn invocation addressed to the deity. After this, the victim is usually slain, though sometimes, it undergoes a previous consecration, technically called *immolatio*, which consists, writes Kennett, "In the throwing of some sort of corn and frankincense, together with the *mola*, that is, bran or meal mixed with salt, upon the head of the beast. In the next place, the priest sprinkled wine between the horns; a custom very often taken notice of by the poets," etc.

From the following passage in Pope's *Iliad* of Homer, some idea may be formed of the sacrificial rites, as they were observed by the Greeks in the mytho-Trojan era:—

"In Chrysa's port now sage Ulysses rode;  
Beneath the deck the destin'd victims stow'd:  
The sails they furl'd, they lash the mast aside,  
And dropt their anchors, and the pinnace tied.

the horns with gold; if of the lesser sort, it was crowned with the leaves of that tree, which the deity was thought most to delight in for whom the sacrifice was designed. And besides these, they wore the *infulæ* and *vittæ*, a sort of white fillets, about their heads."

Next on the shore their hecatomb they land ;  
Chryseis last descending on the strand.  
Her, thus returning from the furrow'd main,  
Ulysses led to Phœbus' sacred fane ;  
Where at his solemn altar, as the maid  
He gave to Chryses, thus, the hero said :  
' Hail, reverend priest ! to Phœbus' awful dome  
A suppliant I from great Atrides come :  
Unransom'd here receive the spotless fair ;  
Accept the hecatomb the Greeks prepare ;  
And may thy god who scatters darts around,  
Aton'd by sacrifice, desist to wound.'  
At this, the sire embrac'd the maid again,  
So sadly lost, so lately sought in vain.  
Then near the altar of the darting king,  
Dispos'd in rank their hecatomb they bring ;  
With water purify their hands, and take  
The sacred offering of the salted cake ;  
While thus with arms devoutly rais'd in air,  
And solemn voice, the priest directs his prayer :  
' God of the silver bow, thy ear incline,  
Whose power encircles Cilla the divine ;  
Whose sacred eye thy Tenedos surveys,  
And gilds fair Chrysa with distinguish'd rays !  
If, fir'd to vengeance at thy priest's request,  
Thy direful darts inflict the raging pest ;  
Once more attend ! avert the wasteful woe,  
And smile propitious, and unbend thy bow.'  
So Chryses prayed. Apollo heard his prayer :  
And now the Greeks their hecatomb prepare ;  
Between their horns the salted barley threw,  
And, with their heads to Heaven, the victims slew :  
The limbs they sever from the enclosing hide ;  
The thighs, selected to the gods, divide :  
On these, in double cauls involv'd with art,  
The choicest morsels lay from every part.  
The priest himself before his altar stands,  
And burns the offering with his holy hands,  
Pours the black wine, and sees the flames aspire ;

The youths with instruments surround the fire :  
The thighs, thus sacrific'd, and entrails dress'd,  
Th' assistants part, transfix, and roast the rest :  
Then spread the tables, the repast prepare,  
Each takes his seat, and each receives his share.  
When now the rage of hunger was repress'd,  
With pure libations they conclude the feast ;  
The youths with wine the copious goblets crown'd,  
And, pleas'd, dispense the flowing bowls around ;  
With hymns divine the joyous banquet ends,  
The pæans lengthen'd till the sun descends :  
The Greeks, restor'd, the grateful notes prolong ;  
Apollo listens, and approves the song."

The Father of History affirms that in Egypt it was deemed a capital offence to sacrifice a beast, which did not bear the impression of the seal of the superintending priest, because this mark was the legal attestation of its fitness for the sacrifice. It is likewise to be observed, that though every deity had some rites and institutions, which were peculiar to him ; yet some of the ritual laws were of a general character, and might with little or no modifications be employed indiscriminately in the sacred service. The offerings were of different kinds, according to the ends which were designed to be accomplished by them, or the predominant feelings which animated the soul of the worshipper. Thus there were thank-offerings, and offerings of rejoicing, meat and fruit-offerings, peace-offerings, sin and burnt-offerings, etc. Burnt-offerings were entirely consumed upon the altar, and therefore the Greeks denominated them *holocausta*. It may not be uninteresting, and it will certainly not be uninteresting, to hear again in this place the author just quoted, in his account of a

sacrifice to Isis, the greatest of the Egyptian goddesses, which seems to premise no mean skill in the culinary art, nor an ordinary taste for symposial cheer, among the ancient builders of the pyramids. "After the previous ceremony of prayers," thus writes the indefatigable historian, "they sacrifice an ox: they then strip off the skin, and take out the intestines, leaving the fat and the paunch; they afterwards cut off the legs, the shoulders, the neck, and the extremities of the loin; the rest of the body is stuffed with *fine bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and various aromatics*; after this process they burn it, pouring on the flame a large quantity of oil: while the victim is burning, the spectators flagellate themselves, having fasted before the ceremony; the whole is completed by their feasting on the residue of the sacrifice."\* The blood, too, of human victims — an instance of which we noticed above — occasionally stained the altars, and illustrated the virtues or appeased the wrath of the gods, and the Egyptians preferred, for this purpose, those whose misfortune it was to have red hair: the symbol, according to their creed, of Typhonian attributes. The rank, the sex, or the character of the deity, gave a peculiar coloring to his worship. Thus, goats, sheep, and white bulls, were the dainty viands in which Jupiter especially delighted; Juno was partial to the hawk, the goose, and particularly to the peacock, hence often distinguished as the *Junonia avis*, while the dittany, the poppy, and the lily, were her favorite flowers. To Apollo, the god of the

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\* Beloe.

silver-bow, the cock, the grasshopper, the wolf, the crow, the swan, the lamb, the olive, the laurel, the palm-tree, etc., were sacred. Venus modestly contented herself with the rose — the queen of flowers, the myrtle, and the apple, and while the dove and the sparrow graced her sacrificial rites, the fishes called *aphya* and *lycostomus*, served to give zest to her enjoyments, and variety to her feasts. The white poplar honored the puissant name of Hercules; and as to the jolly god Bacchus, the leaves of the vine and the ivy encircled his dizzy brow, while the magpie and the panther illustrated the terms of his divinity. According to Sonnerat's *Voyages*, Viehnou is the only Hindoo god to whom bloody sacrifices, consisting of *cocks and kids*, are offered. The Massageta, a great and powerful nation, whose territories, according to Herodotus, extended beyond the river Araxes to the extreme parts of the East, and who were esteemed by some to be a Scythian nation, sacrificed horses to the sun, their only deity, thinking it right to offer the swiftest of mortal animals to the swiftest of immortal beings. Larcher, in reference to this equine sacrifice, in a note on this passage, thus adds: "This was a very ancient custom; it was practised in Persia, in the time of Cyrus, and was probably anterior to that prince. Horses were sacrificed to Neptune and the deities of the rivers, being precipitated into the sea or into the rivers. Sextus Pompeius threw into the sea horses and live oxen, in honor of Neptune, whose son he professed to be." To Saturn, the god of time, human victims were offered as the noblest productions in sublunary time, or as some have errone-

ously taught, because he *delighted in human blood*. While the ancient Mexicans, who were fierce and warlike to a high degree, deemed human sacrifices to be the most acceptable gifts to the gods, their mild and humane neighbors of the South, the Peruvians, never stained their altars with the blood of man, but offered to the sun, moon, and stars, especially to the *god of day* as their chief divinity, and the resplendent sire of the Inca race, "A part of those productions," writes Doctor Robertson, "which his genial warmth had called forth from the bosom of the earth, and reared to maturity. They sacrificed as an oblation of gratitude, some of the animals which were indebted to his influence for nourishment. They presented to him choice specimens of those works of ingenuity which his light had guided the hand of man in forming. But the Incas never stained their altars with human blood, nor could they conceive that their beneficent father, the Sun, would be delighted with such horrid victims."

Among the multifarious worship of the zealous heathens, must not be omitted a more ample description of the *votive* offerings, which were gifts conditionally promised to the gods, under the solemn obligation of a vow. In consequence of such a vow, Jephthah, though a judge in Israel, immolated his daughter, an only child; and L. Furius Camillus was banished by the people of Rome, for distributing, contrary to his vow, the spoils which his valor had won at Veii. Kennett, treating of the Roman games designated as the *rotivi*, says: "They were the effect of any vow made by the magistrates or generals, when they set forward on any expedition,



to be performed in case they returned successful. These were sometimes occasioned by the advice of the Sibylline oracles, or of the soothsayers; and many times proceeded purely from a principle of devotion and piety in the generals. Such particularly were the *Ludi Magni*, often mentioned in historians, especially by Livy. Thus, he informs us, that in the year of the city five hundred and thirty-six, Fabius Maximus, the dictator, to appease the anger of the gods, and to obtain success against the Carthaginian power, upon the direction of the Sibylline oracles, vowed the great games to Jupiter, with a prodigious sum to be expended at them; besides three hundred oxen to be sacrificed to Jupiter, and several others to the rest of the deities. M. Acilius, the consul, did the same thing in the war against Antiochus. And we have some examples of these games being made *quinquennial*, or to return every five years. They were celebrated with Circensian sports four days together.”\*

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\* The Circensian games were performed in the circus at Rome. They were dedicated to the god Consus, and were first instituted by Romulus at the rape of the Sabines. They were in imitation of the Olympian games, and by way of eminence were often called the *great games*. They were not appropriated to one particular exhibition, but were equally celebrated for leaping, wrestling, throwing the quoit and javelin, races on foot as well as in chariots, and boxing. The celebration continued, as we have seen above, four days, beginning on the fifteenth of September. All games in general that were exhibited in the circus, were soon after called Circensian games. Some sea-fights and skirmishes, denominated *naumachi* by the Romans, were likewise performed in the circus.† As the god Consus presided over counsels, the

† Vide *Æneid* of Virgil.



Beside animals and the usual offerings which they presented to their deities, Tacitus informs us that it was the custom of the ancient Germans, on stated days, to sacrifice human victims to Mercury, by whom we are to understand, says Murphy, in a note on this passage, and on the authority of Schedius, *de Diis Germanis, Teutates*; a name which is cognate with Tuisko or Thuisko, who, according to some authors, was the god of justice among the Teutonic people, and apparently the same as the Tyr of the Scandinavians.

In addition to the foregoing evidences of a diversified and prolific devotion, we may observe that splendid vestments, costly trinkets, the blood-stained trophies of war, and the first-born of some nations, were consecrated to deistic service. Nor were the mineral resources of the earth overlooked amid the endless modes and resources of heathen worship. Subjected to the plastic art of metallurgy, they were formed into crude or fair iconic forms, or converted into ritual paraphernalia, in honor or for the service of polytheism. Having related the partial success with which Cræsus had met in his suit before the most celebrated oracles of his time, Herodotus adds: "Cræsus, after these things, determined to conciliate the divinity of Delphi by a great and magnificent sacrifice. He offered up three thousand chosen victims; and he collected a great number of couches

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festivals observed in his honor, were also known under the appellation of *consualia*, which was probably the most ancient by which they were known among the inhabitants of the Seven-Hills.

decorated with gold and silver, many goblets of gold, and vests of purple; all these he consumed together on one immense pile, thinking by these means to render the deity more auspicious to his hopes: he persuaded his subjects, also, to offer up in like manner the proper objects of sacrifice they respectively possessed. As, at the conclusion of the above ceremony, a considerable quantity of gold had run together, he formed of it a number of tiles. The larger of these were six palms long, the smaller three; but none of them were less than a palm in thickness, and they were one hundred and seventeen in number: four were of the purest gold, weighing each one talent and a half; the rest were of inferior quality, but of the weight of two talents. He constructed also a lion of pure gold, which weighed ten talents. It was originally placed at the Delphian temple, on the above gold tiles; but when this edifice was burned, it fell from its place, and now stands in the Corinthian treasury; it lost, however, by the fire, three talents and a half of its former weight. Cræsus, moreover, sent to Delphi two large cisterns, one of gold, and one of silver: that of gold was placed on the right hand in the vestibule of the temple; the silver one on the left. These also were removed when the temple was consumed by fire: the golden goblet weighed eight talents and a half and twelve minæ, and was afterwards placed in the Clazomenian treasury: that of silver is capable of holding six hundred amphoræ; it is placed at the entrance of the temple, and used by the inhabitants of Delphi in their Theophanian festival: they assert it to have been the work of Theodorus of Samos, to

which opinion, as it is evidently the production of no mean artist, I am inclined to accede. The Corinthian also possesses four silver casks, which were sent by Cræsus, in addition to the above, to Delphi. His munificence did not yet cease: he presented also two basins, one of gold, another of silver. An inscription on that of gold asserts it to have been the gift of the Lacedemonians; but it is not true, for this also was the gift of Cræsus. To gratify the Lacedemonians, a certain Delphian wrote this inscription: Although I am able, I do not think proper to disclose his name. The boy through whose hand the water flows, was given by the Lacedemônians; the basins undoubtedly were not. Many other smaller presents accompanied these; among which were silver dishes, and the figure of a woman in gold, three cubits high, who, according to the Delphians, was the person who made the bread for the family of Cræsus. The prince, besides all that we have enumerated, consecrated at Delphi his wife's necklace and girdles."

From the preceding investigations, we learn that the offerings of the gods were almost as multifarious as the individual objects of nature, and that they demanded extensive contributions from every department of the external world. Though the worship of the gods was often shrouded in the mien and weeds of mourning, when tears and lamentations attested a forlorn hope, or the dread of impending doom; yet generally it was of a placid and cheerful character, and vocal and instrumental music, as also the dance and scenic representations, entered extensively among its duties, or increased and elevated the

tone of its pleasures, as well as the solemnity of its effects, and the significance of its expression. The sacred fire, too — the emblem of the sun and the type of purity, guarded by priests or vestal virgins, burned perpetually on many of the altars of antiquity, and in the age of Zoroaster it was the only national symbol of public worship in the Persian empire. All offerings or expressions of homage objectively considered, were intended either to supply absolute wants; merely to gratify the senses; or to swell the pomp, and magnify the name, of the deity. The metamorphoses of the gods: their birth, death, state of languishment, or greatest vigor and glory, which constituted a main feature and profound significance of their lives, were likewise celebrated with solemn rites and festive honors. Some of the gods, as those of the ancient Persians, had no temples, but were adored under the cerulean vault of heaven, especially on the tops of mountains; some, as those of the Arabians, had but one: the celebrated Caaba; and others, as those of Greece and Rome, Assyria, Hindostan, and Egypt, were honored with numerous and gorgeous structures.\* The Capitolium at Rome, which was at once a temple and a citadel, may serve

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\* The gods of the Germanic people were usually worshipped in woods and sacred groves, and in the age of Tacitus, they could boast of but one temple, the name of which was Tanfan; for, says the Roman historian, "There deities are not immured in temples."

"We are told by antiquarians," writes Murphy on Tacitus, "that the word, Tanfan, was composed of *tan*, sylva, a wood, and *fane*, dominus, or lord. Amelot de la Houssaye says it was dedicated to the *first cause of all*, or the supreme being."

to illustrate the concluding part of this sentence. This vast and stately edifice stood upon the Tarpeian rock. It was planned by Tarquinius Priscus, begun by Servius Tullius, finished by Tarquinius Superbus, and consecrated by the consul Horatius, after the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome. The ample base of the capitol embraced four acres of ground; the front was embellished with three rows of pillars, and the other sides with two. The ascent to it from the ground, was by a hundred steps. The magnificence and riches of this temple, are almost incredible. All the consuls successively made donations to it, and Augustus bestowed upon it at one time two thousand pounds weight of gold. Its thresholds were of brass, and its roof of gold. It was adorned with vessels and shields of solid silver, with chariots of gold, etc. It was in the capitol where the consuls and magistrates offered sacrifices when they first entered upon their offices; and there it was whither the triumphal processions of the Romans were always conducted as to the crowning climax of their glory. This noble structure, it is said, owes its name to an accident. When its foundation was sunk, a man's head, called Tulus, was found in the earth, and from this circumstance the hill was denominated the Capitolium—a *capite Toli*.

## SECTION III.

### SACRED PLACES AND RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### SACRED PLACES.

ACCORDING as the pursuits of mankind require fixed residences, like those of the agriculturist, or allow of a roving life, like that of the nomades, the places of divine worship are defined and permanent, or shifting and uncertain. The nomadic tribes carry with them in their pastoral migrations, their idols, their victims, and their priests, whereas people of sedentary or agrarian vocations, make use of the same consecrated places from one generation to another. Warriors and mariners, though they may observe times and seasons, likewise adapt their devotional exercises to the places whither fate or duty may lead them. Natural curiosities often invest certain localities with a mysterious sanctity, and point them out as fit fanes of the gods and of devotion; as, the cave at Delphi; the grotto of Trophonius; the fountain at Dodona, which rose and fell at different intervals of the day; the Olympian fountain



on the banks of the Alpheus, which successively dried up or reappeared every alternate year, and in the vicinity of which jets of flame issued from the earth; the awe-inspiring and sublime falls of Niagara, which once invited the visits and the homage of the remotest savages, inhabiting America's primeval forests; the Indus and the Ganges, especially the latter, which, in the eyes and the faith of every polytheistic Hindoo, is invested with a threefold sanctity. The Russians, also, ranked two holy rivers among the objects of their devotion, and the consecrated localities of worship—the Dnieper, or Borysthènes, and the Bug, or Bog. The former, particularly, was universally revered among those people, and in the holy city Kiev, or Kiew, situated on its right bank, nearly all the gods of the Slavic race were at one time assembled. In an island, at the distance of a four days' journey from its mouth, the inhabitants of Kiev, in their annual voyages to the Black Sea, in the month of June, offered their sacrifices under a sacred oak. Indeed, among many of the ancients, certain trees were regarded as the preeminently sanctified media between the gods and mankind.

The people of Syria, Samos, Athens, Dodona, Arcadia, Germany, etc., had their arborescent shrines; and the gigantic palm-tree in the isle of Delos, *daphnè protogonos*, was believed by its simple inhabitants to be the favorite production of the goddess Latona. Among the Scandinavians, a temple was sometimes distinguished by the name of Hag; as Baldur's Hag, Thor's Hag, etc., a term which is synonymous with the German *Hain*, a grove. It is



said that holy trees still exist among the northern Finnländers. Trees, hills, and fountains were the symbols and the abodes of the gods among the ancient Hessians, and they both rendered them homage and brought them offerings. An enormous oak, called Thor's oak, or *arbor Jovis*, was cut down by order of Winfred, the Apostle of the Germans, while the votaries of the god of thunder beheld the sacrilegious deed with dismay and abhorrence, fearing every moment that some dire convulsion of nature would take place, or hoping, at least, that signal vengeance might be inflicted upon the head of the impious missionary.\* Mountains, the natural monuments of the Divine power and greatness, and which it was fondly presumed would bring man into a closer proximity with the immortal gods, figured conspicuously among the holy places of antiquity; as, the Borj in Persia, the Meru in India, the Amanus in Cilicia, the Olympus in Thessaly, the Ida in Troas and in Crete. The Germans had their Donner-Berg—Thor's mountain, and the Brocken—the mountain

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\* The gods of the ancient Prussians showed a decided predilection both for the oak and the linden. The ground upon which they stood was holy ground, and called Romowe. Under their ample shade the principal gods of the Prussians were worshipped. The most celebrated oak was at Romowe, in the country of the Nantanges. Its trunk was of an extraordinary size, and its branches so dense and diffusive, that neither rain nor snow could penetrate through them. It is affirmed that its foliage enjoyed an amaranthine green, and that it afforded amulets to both man and beast, under the firm belief of the former, at least, that thus employed, it would prove a sure preventive against every species of evil. The Romans, too, were great admirers of this way of worship, and therefore had their *Luci* in most parts of the city.

of altars. *That* was the Olympus of the Franks; *this*, of the Saxons. In the diocess of Oriwesi, in Finnland, is a high cape which bears the name of Erapyhä, or *very holy*, where a square hearth of stones, which constituted a place of sacrifice, may still be seen. The central seat of Swedish idolatry was established at Upsal, in the peninsula of Upland. Lethra, now Leire, in the island of Zeeland, was the city of the gods among the Danes. Here was the holy place where the nation assembled to offer up their sacrifices, to prefer their prayers, and to receive the choicest blessings of the gods. In the Isle of Rugen, in the Baltic Sea, the Pomeranians and other neighboring tribes recognized the focal point of their gods and of their common devotion. While Rhetra, on the shores of the Baltic, contained the associated pantheon of the Scandinavians, the Finns, and their Slavic or Slavonic neighbors, the centre of the religious worship of the ancient Britons, was the Isle of Mona, or Anglesey, in the Irish sea.

The only sacred structures appropriated to divine worship, of which some nations could boast, were rude altars made of large, flat stones; while others, like the Celts in Britain, had their altars inclosed with circular rows of upright stones. These inclosures were designated by the terms *Caer*, *Côr*, and *Cyleh*, which denote respectively a circle, and they constituted the first rudiments of temples. The smaller *Côr* had but one row of stones; the larger three concentric rows: four such rows, it is said, constitute the highest number which has heretofore been discovered. It appears that three rows were the usual number, and that the top of the stones which

composed them, was covered with an architrave, or a succession of large, flat stones, embracing and sustaining the whole framework of the rude specimen of peristylic architecture.\*

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## CHAPTER II.

### RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

NUMEROUS and often splendid festivals formed one of the distinguishing traits of heathenism. Hence the people of antiquity observed almost universally lunar and solar, vernal and autumnal festivals; seed-time and harvest festivals; festivals commemorative of politico-national or provincial calamities or blessings; and festivals which were dedicated to the metamorphoses, or life and death, suffering and glory of the gods. They were celebrated with sacred games, the music of the lyre and the flute, the choral dance, the hymn — *epē*, hiero — pleasure excursions and solemn processions, which were often accompanied by the images of the gods, and which were intended to honor or to gratify their celestial prototypes, as well as to be the means to avert an evil or to insure

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\* The catacombs of Egypt, which in their more perfect form often approached the fair proportions of a temple, and the grotto-temples of Hindostan, seem to have furnished the prototype of the vast and gloomy style of the Gothic order of sacred architecture.

a blessing;\* dramatic representations, in which the lives or the exploits of the deities were enacted by their devout votaries, both for their own edification and that of the delighted and sympathizing spectators: all these and similar modes of festive devotion, constituted an important part of the ritual service of the polytheist. To this day the heathen chants his war-song, or shouts his pæan of triumph, while instrumental music and the dance complete the rhythm of his religio-poetic emotions or aspirations. The Greek festivals bore a decidedly cheerful character. Hence music and orchestric, masquerades, and scenic exhibitions of all kinds, generally accompanied them. Public and private sacrificial festivals were usually followed by festive entertainments. The ancient Greeks did not recline or lie, but sit at their religious feasts, while they observed the strictest propriety in their demeanor and conversation; for they firmly believed that the gods, though invisible to mortal eyes, were present at their sacred meals. The festive ceremonies of the Egyptians and the Romans, wore a more grave and mysterious air. The sprightly, jousant Greeks were struck with a mingled feeling of self-reproach and astonishment, when they beheld the childlike simplicity and profound piety — *eusebeia*, with which the earlier Romans observed their devotional acts. The intimate connection which the order of Roman priests called *Epulones*, had with the celebration of a public feast of the Romans,

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\* The Greek divinities, for instance, of the age in which the fine arts flourished among the Hellenic people, were human beings graduated to the fairest and most perfect ideal-type of humanity.

will serve in some measure to illustrate the nature of the sacred festivals of the heathens. "They had their name," writes Kennett, "from a custom which obtained among the Romans, in time of public danger, of making a sumptuous feast in their temples, to which they did, as it were, invite the deities themselves; for their statues were brought on rich beds, with their *pulvinaria* too, or pillows, and placed at the most honorable part of the table as the principal guests. These regalias they called *epulæ*, or *lectisternia*; the care of which belonged to the *Epulones*."

The sacred games of antiquity, in which the history and the character of the gods were faithfully delineated in the performances of the different actors in the festive scenes, may justly be regarded as the basis of the drama, which, in its polytheistic stage of development, was of a decidedly religious character. Smith, in his "Festivals, Games, and Amusements," etc., communicates some facts relative to the Thespian art, which cannot fail to interest and instruct the reader, while they add another proof of the all-pervading influence of religion upon the lives and amusements of the ancients. "When the performances were concluded," writes this author, "different bodies of magistrates ascended the stage, and made libations on an altar consecrated to Bacchus, thus elevating the theatrical entertainments by impressing upon them a character of sanctity. The opening display was sometimes very beautiful and grand. Aged men, women, and children, are beheld prostrate near an altar imploring the protection of the gods and the aid of their sovereign. Youthful princes arrive in a hunting dress, and surrounded by

their friends and their dogs, sing hymns in honor of Diana ; or a chariot appears, which brings in solemn pomp to the camp of the Greeks Clytemnestra, attended by her slaves, and holding the infant Orestes sleeping in her arms. Here Ulysses and Diomed enter by night the Trojan camp, through which they quickly spread alarm, the sentinels running together from all sides, crying, Stop ! stop ! kill ! kill ! There the Grecian soldiers, after the taking of Troy, appear on the roofs of the houses, and begin to reduce that celebrated city to ashes. At another time coffins are brought, containing the bodies of the chiefs who fell at the siege of Thebes ; their funerals are celebrated on the stage, and their widows express their grief in mournful songs. —One of them, named Evadne, is seen on the top of a rock, at the foot of which is erected the funeral pile of Capaneus, her husband. She is habited in her richest ornaments ; and, deaf to the entreaties of her father and the cries of her companions, precipitates herself into the devouring flames. The marvellous, also, adds to the charm of the exhibition. Some god descends in dramatic machinery ; the shade of Polydorus bursts from the bosom of the earth ; the ghost of Achilles appears to the assembly of the Greeks, and commands them to sacrifice the daughter of Priam ; Helen ascends to the vault of heaven, where she is transformed into a constellation ; or Medea traverses the air in a car drawn by dragons.”

The following ritual observances, calculated to throw additional light upon the theme of our investigations, deserve a notice in this chapter. Speaking of the sacrifices, games, and festivals sacred to Bac-



chus, Tooke thus continues: "The sacrifices themselves were various, and celebrated with different ceremonies, according to the variety of places and nations. They were celebrated on stated days of the year, with the greatest regard to religion, as it was then professed. Oscophoria were the first sacrifices offered up to Bacchus: they were instituted by the Phœnicians, and when they were celebrated, the boys, carrying vine-leaves in their hands, went in ranks, praying from the temple of Bacchus to the chapel of Pallas. The Epilœnaea were games celebrated in the time of vintage, before the press for squeezing the grapes was invented. They contended with one another, in treading the grapes, who should soonest press out most *must*; and in the mean time they sung the praises of Bacchus, begging that the *must* might be sweet and good." The Apaturian festivals were likewise instituted in honor of the god of wine, and were principally observed by the Athenians: their praiseworthy aim was to illustrate how deplorably mankind are deceived and injured by the excessive use of the fermented juice of the grape.



## SECTION IV.

### PRIESTS AND IDOLS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE PRIESTS.

It has been asserted by some authors, that the most ancient priests were jugglers, similar in character to the modern Shamans of Siberia, who are robed in leathern cloaks embellished with numerous little bells, during the exercise of their meretricious profession; or, like the fetich-jongleurs of some negro tribes, whose forehead is decorated with horns while they are engaged in the offices of superstition. It does not require much *clairvoyance* to perceive that this hypothesis is contrary to every idea of truth, as well as all the evidences of experience. For the incipient state of any art, pursuit, or species of knowledge, as well as of human existence, is simple, undisguised, sincere, true. Trickery and falsehood can never be the normal, but they may be, and often are the corrupt state of a profession or form of being: children, unvitiated by their superiors, never dissemble, but adults are often adepts in the *servile*

*vice*, as the ancient Roman denominated the sin of lying! That the heterogeneous functions of priest, conjurer, or magician, were sometimes united in one person, I shall not presume to doubt in the face of sacred history.

It was strictly in conformity with the spirit of heathenism, that mankind should honor and confide in persons who claimed and were believed to be, the mediators between the gods and themselves, and the only reliable as well as possible channel of a divine revelation or communication. Priests only — such was the childlike creed of the earlier ages, could bring an acceptable offering to the gods. They, alone, as the ministers and vicegerents of the celestial powers, durst venture into a closer proximity with them; while by fasting, prayer, frequent ablutions, and ascetic mortifications, they hoped to merit the distinction to which they aspired, and to deserve the confidence of their fellow-beings. The sacerdotal profession was usually either hereditary or elective. If the former was the case, families, castes, or tribes, officiated at the altars of the gods, as, for instance, the Potitii and the Pinarii among the Romans, the Brahmins among the Hindoos, and the Druids among the Celtic nations; if the latter, either the priests, the monarch, or the principal citizens, made the necessary appointments, which were valid only for a definite period, or continued in force during the life of the incumbent.

While free institutions were cherished, and liberal opinions respected among the Greeks and Romans, *the people* generally supplied the vacancies which occurred in the priestly corps. The choice among the

candidates was ordinarily decided by a proper regard to their virtues and social positions, or their public services; sometimes, however, the weight and influence of their families, or their arts and intrigues, determined a decision in their favor: Cæsar made priest of Jupiter, M. Antonius, augur, etc. The high-priest, or *pontifex maximus*, was placed at the head of all the sacerdotal orders of his country. In dignity, he was seldom inferior to the reigning monarch, and in the weight of the social scale, often his superior. Indeed, the *tutulus* and the crown often covered the same head. Plutarch, in speaking of him, says: "He is the interpreter of all sacred rites, or rather a superintendent of religion, having the care not only of public sacrifices, but even of private rites and offerings, forbidding the people to depart from the stated ceremonies, and teaching them how to honor and propitiate the gods."\* "The master or superintendent of the pontifices," writes Kennett, "was one of the most honorable offices in the commonwealth. Numa, when he instituted the order, invested himself first with his dignity, as Plutarch informs us; though Livy attributes it to another person of the same name. Festus's definition of this great priest is, *Judex atque Arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque*, the Judge and Arbiter of divine and human affairs. Upon this account all the emperors, after the example of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, either actually took upon them the office, or at least used the name. And even the Christian emperors, for some time, retained this in the ordinary enumera-

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\* Langhornean translation.

tion of their titles; till the time of Gratian, who, as we learn from Zosimus, absolutely refused it. Polydore Virgil does not question but this was an infallible omen of the authority which the bishop of Rome enjoys to this day, under the name of Pontifex Maximus. The office of the pontifices, was to give judgment in all causes relating to religion; to inquire into the lives and manners of the inferior priests, and to punish them if they saw occasion; to prescribe rules for public worship; regulate the feasts, sacrifices, and all other sacred institutions. Tully, in his oration to them for his house, tells them, that the honor and safety of the commonwealth, the liberty of the people, the houses and fortunes of the citizens, and the very gods themselves, were all intrusted to their care, and depended wholly on their wisdom and management.

"There are but two accounts of the derivation of the name of the pontifices, and both very uncertain; either from *pons* and *facere*; because they first built the Sublician bridge in Rome, and had the care of its repair; or from *posse* and *facere*, where *facere* must be interpreted to signify the same as *offerre* and *sacrificare*. The first of these is the most received opinion; and yet Plutarch himself hath called it absurd. At the first institution of them by Numa, the number was confined to four, who were constantly chosen out of the nobility, till the year of the city four hundred and fifty-four, when five more were ordered to be added of the commons, at the same time that the augurs received the like addition. And as the augurs had a college, so the pontifices, too, were settled in such a body. And as Sylla afterwards

*Pontifex = bridge builder, because  
they are the mediators between earth & heaven*

added seven augurs, so he added as many Pontifices to the college; the first eight bearing the name of *Pontifices majores*, and the rest of *minores*." On the canonical observances, the dress, the diet, etc., of the Egyptian priests, Herodotus thus remarks: "The priests of the gods, who in other places wear their hair long, in Egypt wear it short. Every third day they shave every part of their bodies, to prevent vermin or any species of impurity from adhering to those who are engaged in the service of the gods; the priesthood is also confined to one particular mode of dress; they have one vest of linen, and their shoes are made of the byblus; they wash themselves in cold water twice in the course of the day, and as often in the night: it would indeed be difficult to enumerate their religious ceremonies, all of which they practise with superstitious exactness. The sacred ministers possess, in return, many and great advantages: they are not obliged to consume any part of their domestic property; each has a moiety of the sacred viands ready dressed assigned him, besides a large and daily allowance of beef and of geese; they have also wine, but are not permitted to feed on fish. Beans are sown in no part of Egypt; neither will the inhabitants eat them, either boiled or raw: the priests will not even look at this pulse, esteeming it exceedingly unclean.\* Every

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\* The bean was indigenous to Egypt, but it was neither cultivated nor used as an article of food by the inhabitants; for in the mythological system of the people of the Nile, as well as in that of other nations, it was regarded as a purely material or tellurian production, and employed as the botanical symbol of whatever is

god has several attendant priests, and one of superior dignity, who presides over the rest; when any one dies, he is succeeded by his son.”\* The sacerdotal vestments varied with the occasion, the rank of the wearer, and the character and greatness of the god, of whose ritual service they constituted a part. Pure white habits made of the byssus, black cloaks and purple tunics, respectively distinguished the Egyptian, the Mexican, and the Roman priests. A short tunic likewise invested the sacred persons of the austere and recluse priests of the Celts—the Druids, whose name is said to be derived from *drus*, an oak, because their habitations were in the woods.

“It will be expected,” writes the author of the *Antiquities of Rome*, “that the habits of the Roman priests should be particularly described; but we have no certain intelligence, only what concerned the chief of them, the Augurs, Flamens, and the Pontifices. The augurs wore the *trabea*, first dyed with scarlet and afterwards with purple. Rubenius takes the robe which Herod in derision put on our Saviour to have been of this nature, because St. Matthew calls it scarlet, and St. Luke purple. Cicero useth *dibaphus*—a garment twice dyed, for the augural robe. The proper robe of the flamens was the *laena*, a sort of purple *chlamys*, or almost a double gown, fastened about the neck with a buckle or clasp. It

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low and grovelling. It was of the *earth* and *earthly* throughout, and its inflating qualities were at least one of the proofs of this hypothesis!—G.

\* Beloe.



was interwoven curiously with gold, so as to appear very splendid and magnificent. The pontiffs had the honor of using the *prætexta*; and so had the Epulones, as we learn, Livy, lib. 43. The priests were remarkable for modesty in apparel, and therefore they made use only of the common purple, never affecting the more chargeable and splendid. Thus Cicero, *Vestitus asper nostra hac purpura plebeia ac pene fusca*. He calls it our purple, because he himself was a member of the college of augurs. Servius, when he reckons up the several sorts of priests' caps, makes the *galerus* one of them, being composed of the skin of the beasts offered in sacrifice; the other two being the *apex*, a stitched cap in the form of a helmet, with the addition of a little stick fixed on the top, and wound about with white wool, properly belonging to the *flamines*; and the *tutulus*, a woollen turban, much like the former, proper to the high-priest. By the *galerus* it is likely he means the *albo-galerus*, made of the skin of a white beast offered in sacrifice, with the addition of some twigs taken from a wild olive-tree, and belonging only to Jupiter's flamen." A sad picture of sacerdotal deterioration and languishment, or of the mournful and paltry remains of the pristine glory of the heathen church, gradually but certainly gliding into the oblivious wake of the past, yet feebly struggling in the cause of a superannuated and inane ecclesiastical system, and reluctantly passing from a stage upon which the gods and mankind once played so interesting and important a part, and which has for ages been supported and embellished by the faith, the devotion, the hope, ay, the pride,



the reason, and the glory of priests and kings, of heroes and statesmen, of poets and philosophers, will close this chapter, while it contrasts in imagination the disease and deformity of the present, with the fresh life and splendid elegance of the departed heathenism of Greece and Rome, of Egypt and Carthage, of Persia and Phœnicia, and strikingly teaches the vicissitude to which even the best and the greatest institutions of human society are infallibly doomed.

Doctor Ward, of Serampore, in his "View of all Religions, and the Religious Ceremonies of all Nations at the present Day," thus portrays the condition and character of the ecclesiastics of China: "The priesthood are in no great esteem among the people, being generally of low extraction. They have many different orders among them, which are distinguished by badges, color of habit, or the fashions of their caps. They are all obliged to celibacy while they continue in orders, and that is no longer than they please. But while they continue in orders, and should chance to be convicted of fornication, they must expiate their crimes with their lives; except their high-priest, who is called Chiam, and he always keeps near the Emperor's person, and is in very great repute; he has the liberty to marry, because the high-priesthood must always continue in one family, as Aaron's did for a long while, but not half so long as it has in his family, who has kept up the custom above a thousand years successively, without the intrusion of interlopers. There are no persons of figure that care to have their children consecrated to serve at the altar, so that the priests

who can have no issue of their own, are obliged to buy novices of such mean persons as necessity forces to sell their children; and their study being in the large legends of their divinity, and not having the benefit of conversation with men of letters or polity, they are generally ignorant of the affairs of the world, which makes them contemptible among so polite a people as the ingenious and conversable Chinese laity are. There *preachers* take some apophthegms out of those great men's writings, for texts to comment and expatiate on.\* They live very abstemiously, and rise early before day to pray. Every temple has a cloister or convent annexed to it, and has a certain stipend allowed by the emperor to support the priests and novices, but they get much more by letting lodgings to travellers, who generally lodge in their cells, than the emperor's allowance; besides, they have a genteel way of begging from strangers, by bringing tea and sweetmeats to regale them."

Of the Brahmins of the Hindoos, this author communicates the following facts: "Among the *bramhun* castes, there are several degrees or orders. That called *Kooleenu* is one indicating the highest merit. None could enter this order unless he was distinguished by meekness, learning, good report, etc. At the present time, the highest seat of honor is yielded to a *Kooleenu* on all occasions, yet the supposed superiority of this order in natural or acquired tal-

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\* The author refers to the writings of Confucius and Tansine, eminent hierophants and moral philosophers of the ancient Chinese.

ents, nowhere exists. The name of the order, however, still gives the bramhuns belonging to it, great superiority among the lower orders of this caste. Formerly the bramhuns were employed in austere devotion and abstinence, their business being the worship of the gods — then they were supported by kings and princes, and it seems did not employ their hands in worldly labor. At the present time only a few are supported in this way, most of them being obliged to enter into all kinds of worldly employment for support; many of them are beggars, some steal," etc.

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## CHAPTER II.

### IDOLS.

IN the earliest ages of heathenism, artificial idols did not exist, and for the plain reason that no one possessed sufficient skill or means to make them. Larcher, in a note on Herodotus, having stated that the most ancient nations were not worshippers of images, adds: "Lucian tells us that the ancient Egyptians had no statues in the temples. According to Eusebius, the Greeks were not worshippers of images before the time of Cecrops, who first of all erected statues to Minerva. And Plutarch tells us that Numa forbade the Romans to represent the deity under the form of a man or an animal; and for seventy years this people had not in their temples

any statue or painting of the deity." According to the Father of History, the ancient Persians had no images of the gods, and from Cæsar it appears that the Germans had but few. Tacitus, speaking of the latter, says: "Their deities were not immured in temples, nor represented under any kind of resemblance to the human form. To do either, were, in their opinion, to derogate from the majesty of superior beings."\*

Idolatry, however, is of an ancient date. At first, many of the objects and phenomena of nature, endowed with striking properties, or distinguished for their remarkable appearances, were regarded as the media of preternatural influence or communication, and treated with religious veneration. A belief prevailed extensively among the ancients that a god now and then sent down his image from heaven to mankind. To this category of idols belonged the *Cætylia* or meteoric stones, supposed to have fallen from the abode of the celestial powers, and therefore called heaven-stones. Brontia, or thunder-bolts, were also iconic representatives of the deities, sent to their credulous votaries. Mone affirms that the ancient Germans had not only their thunder-bolts, but likewise their *rainbow dishes*! Antiquity could boast of many holy stones; as, the one at Pessinus, in Galatia, sacred to Cybele; the one of the sun-god Heliogabalus, in Syria; and the one at the temple of Delphi.

The principal idol of the ancient Arabs, as it ap-

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\* Murphy.

pears from Jablonski's *Pantheon Ægyptiorum*, was an irregular square black stone, four feet high and two feet broad, denominated Dysares. The Hindoos, we are informed by Tavernier, commonly have in their pagodas a round stone, brought from the Ganges, which they worship as a god. They also pay homage to an idol called Nahadeo, which is a conic pillar of stone. In one of their temples visited by Pietro della Valle, the idols were two stones somewhat long, like the ancient *termini* or landmarks, and painted. "All these idols," writes this author, "are served, adored, perfumed, offered to, and washed every day, as for pleasure by the bramins, who assist at this service with much diligence."\* Graven images — *zoanon*, were the oldest kind of deistic representations among the Teutonic people. Among the Germans, Tacitus assures us, the figures of savage animals were employed as religious symbols. Rude as were some of the aborigines of America, historians inform us that they had both painted and graven or sculptured images of their gods. Like the Germans and other polytheistic nations, "The Canadian Indians," says Charlevoix, "carry the symbolic figures of their gods, called Manitou, with them to battle, and would as soon forget their arms as their idols."† Judging from the ill-formed, uncouth idols of existing barbaric people; as, the New-Zealanders, the Kamschadales, the Bouraits,

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\* Priestley's Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos, etc.

† Murphy on Tacitus.

etc., it is likely that the earliest iconic productions of art were a pale, or block of wood with a human head and face carved on it; and a form deemed god-like, moulded in clay, and hardened in the fire or the sun, may be supposed to have been the first trial at statuary. Some awkward endeavors to paint deistic symbols or likenesses, may have constituted a synchronic exercise of skill, or even preceded these incipient efforts of the plastic arts. Cast and sculptured representations of the gods, required a maturer knowledge and a longer practice before the graves and the temples of the deities could be peopled with their varied and more perfect forms by the *theopoioi*—god-makers, as the imago-artists have sometimes been denominated. In the earlier stages of religious development, many idols were not, strictly speaking, *images*, but mementos or insignia of a divine presence or influence in nature; and even at a later period, they were symbols of some great truths in moral and physical science, rather than *fac-similes* of some ill or well defined divine originals: facts, which cannot but exercise a beneficial influence on our mythological researches.

A description of some of the Hindoo images of the gods by Doctor Ward, will give us some idea of the iconology of those once renowned people. Brahma, Vichnou, and Siva, constitute the Hindoo trinity, and to their statues I shall first call the reader's attention. "Brumha," writes this author, "may be properly noticed first, as he is called the *creator* and the grandfather of gods and men; in the latter designation, he resembles Jupiter, in the lasciviousness of his conduct, having betrayed a criminal pas-



sion towards his own daughter.\* Brumha's image is never worshipped, nor even made; but the Chundu describes it as that of a red man with four faces. He is red, as a mark of his being full of the ruju goonu: he has four faces, to remind the worshippers that the vedas proceeded from his four mouths. In one hand he has a string of beads, to show that his power as creator was derived from his devotion: the pan of water in his left hand, denotes that all things sprang from water. This deity, thus preëminent, is yet entirely destitute of a temple and worshippers. The image of Vishnoo is that of a black man, with four arms, sitting on Gurooru, a creature half bird, half man, and holding in his hands the sacred shell, the chuckru, the lotus, and a club. His color, black, is that of the destroyer; which is intended to show that Shinu and he are one;† he has four hands, as the representative of the male and female powers: the shell, blown on days of rejoicing, implies that Vishnoo is a friendly deity: the chuckru is to teach that he is wise to protect; the lotus to remind the worshipper of the nature of final emancipation; that, as the flower is raised from the muddy soil, and after rising by degrees from immersion in the waters, expands itself above the surface, to the admiration of all, so man is emancipated from the chains of human birth; the club shows that he

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\* This criminal passion of Brahma for his own daughter, is sheer nonsense, as it is a mere figurative expression, and signifies simply the creative energies of heaven and earth in harmonious union. — G.

† Vichnou and Siva are as much one as Jesus and the Holy Ghost, and no more. — G.



chastises the wicked. Gurooru is a portion of Shivu; his body represents the veda. Vishnoo is distinguished, as being the source of most of the Hindoo incarnations; and he commands the worship of the greatest division of the Hindoo population. There are no temples nor festivals in honor of Vishnoo. He is called the *Preserver*; but the actions ascribed to him under this character, are referred to other forms and names. The Shalgramu, a stone, is a form of Vishnoo. During four months of the year, all the forms of this god are laid to sleep. Siva, or Shivu, is seen with his Trisula, or trident, in one hand; and in another the Pasha, which is a rope for binding and strangling incorrigible offenders; his two foremost hands, right and left, are in a position very common to several deities; they are said to indicate an invitation to ask, and a promise to grant or protect. His third eye, pointing up and down, is seen in his forehead—his three eyes, probably, denoting his view of the three divisions of time, past, present, and future. Serpents, emblems of immortality, form his ear-rings. His pendant collar is composed of human heads, and marks the extinction and succession of generations of mankind by time.\*

“The Indian Pluto—Yumu, is a dark green man, clothed in red, with inflamed eyes; he sits upon a buffalo; has a crown on his head, and holds in his right hand a club with which he drives out the soul

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\* The Hindoo triad sit with their legs crossed under them, while their headgear is composed of a massive steeple-shaped crown, containing several convoluted stories. — G.

from the body, and punishes the wicked. This is the form of terror, as a king of the souls of the dead; but he is also worshipped in a form less terrific, which he is said to assume when he passes a sentence of happiness on the meritorious. Beside this annual festival, he is worshipped on other occasions, and receives the homage of the Hindoos in their daily ablutions. There are several remarkable coincidences between Yumu and Pluto. Lukshmee, the goddess of fortune, is the wife of Vishnoo: she is said to have been produced at the churning of the sea, as Venus was said to be born of the froth of the sea: at her birth, all the gods were enamored with her. She is painted yellow, with a water-lily in her right hand; in which form she is worshipped frequently by Hindoo women; but no bloody sacrifices are offered to her. The goddess of fecundity — Shusht'hee, is honored with six annual festivals, celebrated chiefly by females. Her image is that of a yellow woman, sitting on a cat, and nursing a child; though, in general, a rough stone, painted on the top, and placed under a tree, is the object of worship," etc.

"In many instances," writes the author just quoted, "there is a similarity in the exterior forms of the religion of Fo, and that of the Romish church. Upon the altars of the Chinese temples were placed behind a screen an image of Shin-moo, or the holy mother, sitting with a child in her arms, in an alcove, with rays of glory round her head, and tapers constantly burning before her." Finally, this writer thus remarks on the idols of the Bouraites, who are of Mongol origin, and reside in the western part of Si-

beria and on the frontiers of China, in the government of Irkutsk: "The religion of the Bouraits is a mixture of Lamaism and Shamaism. In their huts they have wooden idols, naked or clothed: others are of felt, tin, or lamb's skin; and others again rude daubings with soot by the Shamans, who give them arbitrary names. The women are not allowed to approach, or to pass before them. The Bourait, when he goes out, or returns to his hut, bows to his idols, and this is almost the only daily mark of respect that he pays them. He annually celebrates two festivals in honor of them, and at these, men only have a right to be present." With these overwrought, sometimes unæsthetic, or even puerile symbolical forms of the iconic art, I shall now compare a few specimens of the sacred plastic of the Greeks and Romans—the fairer and nobler ideal productions of a more correct and elegant artistic taste. Jupiter, the king and father of gods and men, is generally represented as a brawny divinity, with a stern countenance, and a copious beard, sitting upon a throne of ivory and gold, under a rich canopy, holding thunderbolts in his right hand, just ready to be hurled at the rebellious giants at his feet, and grasping with his left a sceptre made of cypress—the symbol of the eternity of his empire, because that wood is free from corruption. An eagle with expanded wings, is perched on the top of this type of regal power, or it stands at the feet of the *thunderer*. The god wears golden shoes, and an embroidered cloak, adorned with various flowers and figures of animals, the emblems of the diversified and multitudinous forms of creation. The image

of Juno, the queen of the gods, and sister and wife of Jupiter, was made of ivory and gold. In one hand the fair goddess holds a pomegranate, and in the other a golden sceptre, upon which a cuckoo is perching. A diadem decorates her head, while a throne is her chair of state. Peacocks, recommended by their gorgeous plumage, sit near her, and Iris displays around her the brilliant colors of the rainbow. The statues of Apollo portray the god of the fine arts and of all elegant accomplishments, as a tall, beardless youth, with long hair, a graceful person, and a comely countenance. His faultless head is generally surrounded with beams of light, and encircled with a laurel wreath. His person is robed in resplendent garments embroidered with gold, while he holds a bow and arrows in one hand, and a harp in the other. His symbolical drapery varies a little in some instances, and a shield and the graces enter into the iconic garniture of the *god of the silver-bow*. The image of the goddess Venus, is the last example which I shall adduce here in elucidation of the national peculiarities in the iconic art among the heathen. "Turn your eyes now to a sweet object," says Tooke, "and view that goddess in whose countenance the graces sit playing, and discover all her charms. You see a pleasantness, a mirth, and joy in every part of her face. Observe with what becoming pride she holds up her head and views herself, where she finds nothing but joys and soft delights. She is clothed with a purple mantle glittering with diamonds. By her side stand two Cupids, and round her are three Graces, and behind her follows the lovely, beautiful Adonis, who

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holds up the goddess' train. The chariot in which she rides is made of ivory, finely carved, and beautifully painted and gilded. It is drawn by swans and doves, or swallows, as Venus directs when she pleases to ride. You will see her sometimes painted like a young virgin rising from the sea, and riding in a shell; at other times like a woman holding the shell in her hand, her head being crowned with roses. Sometimes her picture has a silver looking-glass in one hand, and on the feet are golden sandals and buckles. In the pictures of the Sicyonians, she holds a poppy in one hand, and an apple in the other, etc."

The colors of the images of the gods were usually of symbolical import, and though symbology properly belongs to the second part of this work, they seem to require a brief notice in this place, as they are a constituent element of iconology. According to Winckelmann, "On Allegory," Bacchus was clad in a red or scarlet robe, the emblem of wine, or as some suppose, of the victory which the jolly god achieved over mankind when he introduced among them many of the arts and comforts of life. Pan, Priapus, the Satyrs, etc., were likewise painted red, and Plutarch assures us that red was originally the prevailing color of the idols. Osiris — the personification of the solar year of the Egyptians — was represented in a painting of vast dimensions, with a blue face, and blue arms and feet, and resting on a black ground: symbolical of the sun in its subterrestrial orbit. Black and blue also distinguished the portrait of the planetary god Saturn, and were typical of the sun in Capricorn, or its southern declension



to the zone of sable Ethiopia. As the king of the lower regions, Serapis was painted black among the Egyptians, while the image of Jupiter among the same people, was ash-grey or scarlet; that of Mars a red stone, and Venus's dyed with the same color; that of Apollo shown in the lustrous hue of gold, and Mercury's was covered with the modest blue, etc. The natural color of the stones of which the images of the gods were formed, were often selected on account of their allegorical significance. Thus that indefatigable traveller, Pausanias, informs us that the river-gods of the ancients were made altogether of white marble, and that only for the statue of the Nile, a black stone was chosen to denote the Ethiopic origin of the fluviate divinity: a Nilic bust in the Napoleon-museum confirms this statement. Agreeably to their cosmogony, the Hindoos selected the dark-blue color to typify water as the primordial element of creation. Hence this color also designated Narajan, the mover of the primitive waters. According to Jones' *Dissertations relating to Asia*, a handsome image of this god wrought in blue marble, might be seen at Catmandu, the principal city of Nepal, in a reclining attitude, and in the act of swimming. On the first of January, the Roman consul, clothed in a white toga, and mounted upon a white horse, rode up to the Capitol: it was in honor of Jupiter, who — as we learn from Pherecydes, was adored there as the sun-god of the Romans, as also in commemoration of the victory of that deity over the giants, when the many-eyed and many-handed Briareus — winter, as the mischievous leader of the rebellious host, was himself most sig-



nally defeated. This consular ceremony presented the living image of the solar deity, imbued with the hue of light. Finally, Ceres was the black or the refulgent goddess, accordingly as she spent her time in the hadean or supernal regions; and Vesta, as the earth, was green, while in her capacity of fire-goddess, the color of flame defined and illustrated her divinity.

## SECTION V.

### THE CLASSIFICATION AND RELATIVE ANTIQUITY OF THE GODS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE GODS.

WHEN we reflect that in the earlier periods of polytheism, the deities of antiquity amounted to an innumerable multitude; that, according to the ample creed of the heathen, all the relations and actions of mankind as well as all the elements, the phenomena, and the energies of the universe, had their presiding divinities; and that Greece—in the exuberance of a lively imagination, or stimulated by a religious want still unsupplied, after having ransacked all nature for a new god without finding one, yet apprehensive or desirous that one might still exist of whom they were ignorant, and who would probably avenge the neglect with which he was treated, or be willing to confer a blessing upon them heretofore unfelt and unknown, resolved to obviate so fatal a result, or to procure so great a good, and erected an altar to *the unknown god*, we have reason to despair

of meeting with any thing like complete success in our efforts to arrange the numerous aspirants to our attention, according to their supposed rank and real merits.\*

From the graduated position which the deities occupied in the Pantheon at Rome, it appears that they were divided into six classes: the celestial, the terrestrial, the aquatic, the infernal, the *minutii*, or *semones*, together with the *miscellanei*, and the *adscriptitii* with the *indigetes*.† The celestial deities possessed extraordinary authority, and their fame excelled that of all the rest. As their votaries believed them to be eminently employed in the government of the world, the worship which they bestowed upon them, was of the highest order. Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, Bacchus, and Mars; Juno, Minerva, Venus, Latona, and Aurora, are the significant names of these illustrious divinities. Superior in number, but inferior in rank and influence, to the preceding members of a common divine family, are the terrestrial

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\* My remarks in the text, on the unknown god, are based on the generally received interpretations of the Scripture passage in which this god is noticed, but it is pretty clear to me, and the Apostle Paul confirms my convictions in the view which he takes of the subject, asserting the unknown god to be the *God that made the world, and all things therein*, etc., that the Greeks understood by this deity the absolutely Supreme Being, who, according to their altar-inscription, they modestly declare to be the unknown — the incomprehensible! Who among mortals, Christian or pagan, does or can know him? For the Christians even see but *darkly*, and as it were *through a glass*.

† The meaning of *semones* is *quasi semi-homines*; and the term *indigetes* is derived from *inde* and *geniti* — gods who are born in the same place where they are worshipped; local deities.

gods and goddesses, who are separated into two divisions, the one presiding over fields and cities, the other inhabiting the uncultivated country and the woods. The former is more especially distinguished by the cognomen *terrestrial*, while the epithet *rural*, defines the latter. That comprises Saturn, Janus, Vulcan, Æolus, Momus, Vesta, Cybele, Ceres, the Muses, and Themis; this, in the male and female lines as laid down in the theogonic tables, Pan, Silvanus, Silenus, the Satyrs, the Fauns, Priapus, Aristæus, Terminus, Pales, Flora, Feronia, Pomona, the Nymphs, etc. Among the aquatic deities, Oceanus, Neptune, and Triton, the Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis, deserve our attention, though they no longer claim our homage. The first in this brief list, was regarded in the primitive ages of heathenism, as the originator of all things, and therefore named *the father*, not only of all the seas and rivers, together with their finny inhabitants, but of the very gods themselves. To the care of the second, the dominion of the sea, and the safety of ships, as well as the lives and fortunes of the nautical world, were intrusted. Nor did rivers and fountains escape the vigilance and the guardianship of his three-tined sceptre. This god had a son — the above-named Triton, who seems to have inherited all the great qualities for which his parent has been so justly celebrated, and in every way to have been worthy of him. As the *trumpeter* of his father, he raised or calmed at pleasure, the boisterous billows of the deep. Among the rest of this maritime race, the Sirens, ill-formed as they were, prided themselves on account of their charms, to which they attracted the

attention of unwary seafarers, through the enrapturing strains of their music. With their meretricious songs, especially, they enticed the ambitious, the voluptuous, or the covetous, to their destruction: beware of the allurements of sin, is the simple but expressive import of this myth! The character of Scylla and Charybdis, is sufficiently illustrated in the fatal rock and world-renowned whirlpool, which have transmitted the memory of their terrific names and malignant deeds to posterity; and the lesson which they inculcate, is that lust and intemperate habits render our voyage through this world extremely perilous.

The plan of this work requires that a notice of the infernal gods, whose rank in the pantheon assigns to them a place here, should be reserved for a future occasion, when we shall speak of *judgment to come*. The subordinate deities, among whom are included the Penates, the Lares, the Genii, and those friendly and sociable divinities who exercise a benignant supervision over nuptials and infants, therefore await our description.

The Penates were inferior deities among the Romans, who presided over various interests of the commonwealth. They bore the appellation of Penates, because they were generally placed *in pentissima aedium parte*—in the innermost part of the houses. The place where they stood was afterwards called Penetralia, and they themselves received the name of Penetrales.\* According to the best authorities, the Penatean divinities were divided into three

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\* Cicero *De Natura Deorum*, asserts that the name imports *every thing that man eats*.

orders, the first having the supervision of provinces and kingdoms; the second, of cities, and the third, of houses and families. These comprise successively the *Penates* properly so called; *the gods of the country*, or the "great gods;" and *the small gods*. Macrobius, in his *Saturnalia*, makes the Penates synonymous with Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Vesta, and defines them as the gods to whom we owe our lives and all our faculties; but Macrobius flourished towards the close of the fourth and at the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era, and his testimony on this subject can therefore be received as valid, only when it coincides with older authors, whose qualifications to decide a question of this kind, no one will presume to doubt. Virgil tells us, in the second book of the *Æneid*, that Æneas, upon the advice of Hector, carried with him from Troy, when he went forth from that devoted city to seek his fortune in other climes and on more hospitable shores, the Penates and *the potent Vesta* with her perpetual fire. This passage alone is sufficient to show that Vesta and the Penates are distinct divinities. Besides, the statues of the Penates were generally made of wax, ivory, silver, or earth, according to the affluence or the poverty of the worshipper, and the only offering which they received were wine, incense, and fruit, except on rare occasions, when lambs, sheep, goats, etc., were immolated on their altars: facts, which clearly assign to them relations and functions distinct from those of Jupiter and his compeers.\*

In the first ages of idolatry, the gods may have

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\* "Timæus, and from him Dionysius says," writes Tooke, "that these Penates had no proper shape or figure; but were wooden



been often confounded, or at least indistinctly classified, and then a Jupiter, a Minerva, etc., and a Penate, may have passed for the same species of divinity; but when iconology attained the rank and the precision of a science, and every part of it became clothed with hieroglyphical significance, each deity that deserved the name, had his separate niche and ritual service, and from that time metaphor and poetic license alone could now and then violate the established system. It was the business of the Lares, who were the twin sons of Mercury and the nymph Lara, to keep in safety the houses and streets of the citizens, and thus in some measure, to share the domestic functions of those Penates who were emphatically household gods. Of the Genii, we may observe that they were the guardians, overseers, and safe-keepers of men, from their cradles to their graves: the Junones stood in the same tutelar relation to women. They likewise carried their prayers to the gods, and made intercession in their behalf: they were the symbols of the generative powers in nature. The Greeks called the Genii *demons*. Every person had a good and an evil genius or demon allotted to him. The good genius that is given to every one at his birth, constantly incites him to the practice of virtue and piety; whereas the bad one prompts him to all manner of vice and wickedness.

The nuptial deities comprised some of the most eminent, as well as a number of the inferior divini-

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or brazen rods, shaped somewhat like trumpets. But it is also thought by others, that they had the shape of young men with spears, which they held apart from another."

ties. Jupiter *perfectus* or *adultus*, Juno *perfecta* or *adulta*, Venus, Suada, and Diana, were so absolutely necessary to all marriages, that none could lawfully be solemnized without them. Beside these, several inferior gods and goddesses were worshipped at all nuptial ceremonies. Jugatinus joined the bride and bridegroom together in the yoke of matrimony; Domiducus conducted the former into the house of the latter; Viriplaca reconciled husbands to their wives; Manturna was invoked that the wife might never leave her husband, but in all the conditions of life abide with him, etc. Such was the nature of their functions, which made it their duty to see that every thing which appertained to married life was managed with a strict regard to propriety and equal justice. Their kinsmen and partial allies, who were charged with the supervision of infants—a task which included also children of riper years—interested themselves in various ways, and it may be presumed, at a great cost of time and labor, in the welfare of the rising generation, from the perilous moments of their birth to the blithe and buoyant age of juvenility. Janus, Opis, Nascio, Cunia, Levana, beside numerous others, chiefly female divinities, figured in this pleasing but responsible vocation. In regard to the Dii Indigetes and Adscriptitii or the demi-gods and heroes; as, Hercules, Jason, Theseus, Castor and Pollux, Perseus, Æsculapius, Prometheus, Atlas, Orpheus, in addition to a long list of congenial names and personages, who have played a prominent part upon the stage of human and deific life, it is only necessary to observe that they are the predominant manifestations or personified attributes of the

superior gods, as they are developed in the laws and phenomena of nature ; ay, nature itself in all its mutations of renovation and decay, of propitious and adverse influences, under the mystic guise of fable and allegory ; and that their actions and passions, their deaths and resurrections, their beneficent labors and glorious deeds of heroism, or their subjugations under inimical powers, and deplorable state of imbecility, can only receive a thorough exposition as well as a just appreciation, from the symbolical theology of polytheism, to an acquaintance with which the reader may therefore expect, in due time, to be introduced.\*

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## CHAPTER II.

### THEIR RELATIVE ANTIQUITY.

THE comparative antiquity of the gods may be ascertained with some degree of accuracy, from the age in which the priests, as the natural and voluntary agents of the higher powers, are found to have been dedicated to their service, or as the artificial creations, who owe their origin, or at least their sanction, and characteristic peculiarities, either wholly or in part

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\* In the construction of this chapter, I obtained essential aid from Tooke's "Pantheon of Heathen Gods and Illustrious Heroes," — an acknowledgment which I gratefully makes to the *manes* of the author.

to extraneous causes; such as, the policy of civil rulers, the exigency of society, and the inventions or the embellishments of the poets. In the primeval ages of the world, priests as naturally sprang up among mankind as the gods themselves. No sooner did any one conceive the presence of a god, and express his religious sentiments in some outward act of devotion, than he performed the office and was entitled to the appellation of *a priest*; and thus the foundation of the sacerdotal profession was coeval with the first practical recognition of a divinity in nature. Divine worship is one of the most powerful means to develop the human mind, and to inspire it with the principles of virtue; and it would, therefore, be difficult to conceive of what use the gods could possibly have been to the human race, if mankind either did not or could not acknowledge and adore them, and thus obtain the important end of religion—the amelioration and happiness of mortals.

As to the iconic forms under which the gods have been represented in the plastic arts of polytheism, those divinities may be deemed to be the most ancient whose images proclaim a fetich origin: the uncouth offspring of a gross sensual experience of the undefined yet subduing material forces and manifestations of the external world, unrefined by taste, or unimproved and unennobled by abstract reasoning. As the domiciliary relations of man are older than his political associations, so the domestic gods may be supposed to have existed prior to those who constituted the objects of municipal worship. And it is on the same principle, and for similar reasons, that those gods must be considered to have been

originated in remoter antiquity, whose recognition by man has preceded the foundation of social institutions. It was then that each person found and served his god according to his means or his faith, without any studied plan or regard to prescription. However interesting the subject is which forms the theme of these investigations, it is involved in the dense mist of past ages, which have, in many instances, transmitted to posterity the records of institutions, without any certain criterion by which to judge of the date at which they were founded, or of the people to whom they owed their existence, and I shall, therefore, not commit the folly to presume that I will be able so to execute my task as to leave no room for vain regrets or solid improvements.

“The most ancient order of priests,” writes Kennett, “were the Luperci, sacred to Pan, the god of the country, and particularly of shepherds, whose flocks he guarded.\* They had their name from the deity they attended on, called in Greek *lukaios*, from *lukos*, a wolf, in Latin *lupus*,† because the chief employment of Pan was the driving away such beasts from the sheep that he protected,” etc. These priests

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\* In case the flocks and herds of the primitive Arcadians did not multiply and prosper according to their expectations, the images of the god Pan underwent the discipline of flagellation at the hands of the offended nomades: a behavior which clearly proves the rude manners and puerile faith of his self-interested worshippers. — G.

† Plutarch derives the name of the Luperci from *lupa*, a she-wolf, and traces the origin of their institution to the fabulous *lupa* which suckled Romulus and Remus, but, as will presently appear, without a valid reason. — G.



celebrated an annual festival, designated as the Lupercalia, in the month of February, in honor of the same sylvan deity, and which, according to Plutarch, was called the *feast of wolves*, and was of a lustral character. He adds that it claimed to be of great antiquity, and that it was the generally received opinion that the Arcadians, at the period of their immigration into Italy, under the conduct of Evander, introduced it among the natives.\* The Arvales were twelve in number, and the terms of their institution required that they should celebrate the *Ambarvalia*,

\* The horned and goatlike Pan is evidently the same as Jupiter-Ammon. Equally true is it that Pan-Lukos and Zeus, or Jupiter-Lycæus, are synonymous. In the second part of this work, where the *lupercalia* will be astronomically explained, further light will be thrown upon this subject. From the Theogony and Cosmogony of Hesiod, we learn that the four oldest dynasties of gods were those of Chaos, the first that existed or was made — *geneto*, and the same in signification as *Chasma*, a hollow space or void; Uranus, ethereal space, derived from *aûra*, pure air — the animus of Chaos: it also means time, or *ōra*, and *hora*, the hour; Chronos or Saturn, time in its proper and more extensive acceptance; and Zeus, Deus, or Dis, the same as Jupiter, the god of the year, of ether, and the lord of the atmosphere. Chaos, according to this cosmo-geogonic system, being the primeval god from whom all the male deities just mentioned *emanated*, it follows that the last in the series, as well as the first, must have essentially contained all the rest in his godhead, or that he is Chaos, Uranus, and Chronos, only under a modified and improved form. At this stage of deistic development, the theologians, the poets, and the hiero-artists, took a stand and concentrated all that is great and good in Zeus or Jupiter; and hence it is that this god is Pan, or Faunus, *All*; “the father of gods and men.” To this day, Pan, in the Slavic language, denotes a *lord*, and *fanum*, in the Latin, is a temple of the gods — a *Pan-theoi*.



festivals, the name of which is derived *ab ambiendis arvis* — going round the fields, and which consisted, beside a solemn sacrifice of a sow, a sheep, and a bull, to Ceres, in processions round the fields, in honor of the goddess of corn. The *ambarvalia* were twice repeated during the year, once in April, and again in July. It appears that during the processions, the celebrants wore wreaths of oak-leaves, singing hymns to Ceres, and entreating her to preserve their corn, and to grant them an abundant harvest, while a crown made of the ears of corn, and secured to its place by a white fillet, decked their brows at the sacrificial rites.\* The antiquity of the *Arvales* is at least coequal with the foundation of Rome; for Romulus in his own person, filled the first vacancy in the order composed of the sons of Acca Laurentia, who had the honor to be at once the nurse of a king and the mother and foundress of the *Arvalean* priesthood. This venerable Roman matron being herself a priestess of Ceres, and a strict observer of the *ambarvalian* solemnities, before violence and intrigue, or the omen of birds, had conferred despotic power on Romulus, it is likely that the sacerdotal order designated by the appellation of her pious and exemplary sons, had existed under another name, or languished in anonymous obscurity, long anterior to the birth of the seven-hilled city, and that it is one of the oldest institutions of polytheism.

The *Flamines*, whose cognomen is derived from their headdress, which, it appears, was a flame-

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\* The probability is that the oak-wreath was worn in the spring, and the cereal crown in July — the season of ripe grain.

colored turban, were at first only three in number, and distinguished respectively as the Flamen Dialis, Martialis, and Quirinalis. The first was sacred to Jupiter, and ranked as a person of the highest consequence in the commonwealth; the second, to Mars; and the third, to Romulus: the most powerful celestial triumvirate, and who, as Gibbon the historian has playfully remarked, "Watched over the fate of Rome, and of the universe." To Numa the Sabine prince and pious successor of the arrogant Romulus, this famous order of priests was indebted for its origin. The three Flamens thus defined were always chosen out of the nobility. "Several priests of the same order, though of inferior power and dignity," says Kennett, "were added in later times; the whole number being generally computed at fifteen."

As to the Salii, whose institution dates about the same time as that of their Flaminian brethren, they were the avowed guardians of the renowned Ancilia or twelve brazen shields, suspended in the temple of the belligerent Mars. They were denominated Salii, writes Plutarch, from the *subsultive* dance which they performed along the streets, when, in the month of March, they carried the sacred shields through *the city* which was twice destined to be the mistress of the world; but which has already been once signally despoiled of her fame and power, and now apparently trembles a second time on the verge of a profound humiliation. According to tradition, one of these shields, and the original and type of all the rest, fell from heaven into the hands of Numa, whose exemplary zeal in the cause of the gods and of religion was thus miraculously rewarded; and the fair goddess

Egeria assured her devout favorite that this wonderful shield had been sent by the immortal gods for the cure and the safety of the infant city, whose inhabitants just then suffered from the ravages of a most destructive pestilence.\* On the Epulos — Epulones,

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\* The assertion in the text, that the origin of the Salii dated nearly at the same time as that of the Flamines, has reference only to their introduction among the Romans. From Servius on the *Æneid of Virgil*, we learn that the people of the ancient cities of Tusculum and of the Tibur, had their Salii long before the Romans. Plutarch, in the Life of Numa, traces the Salii to a person of the name of Salius, a Samothracian, whom Æneas carried with him to Italy, where he instructed the youths of the country in the Pyrrhic dance. Others again derive the institution from Arcadia, or from Asia, and all the researches on the subject show that the Salian priesthood was founded in the primeval ages of heathenism. At Rome they had their temple on the Palatine hill; there they exercised their sacred functions; and hence they were surnamed the Palatini. Originally the Salian college amounted to the same number as that of the sacred shields committed to their care. They were attired in a variegated and embroidered robe, *tunica picta*. They usually wore a mitre or cap, called *apex*, which tapered to a sharp point, and resembled a helmet. On festival occasions, however, as it appears from the *Æneid of Virgil*, wreaths made of poplar-leaves decked their saintly brows. Their services were dedicated to Mars, considered especially as *Mars Gradivus* — *a gradiendo in bella*: a martial god, who rushes into battle with hasty and determined steps. The festival of the stern god of war was celebrated in the *Campus Martius*, on the first day of March, on which commenced the year of the old Romans. It was then that the earth began to be covered with verdure, and when their warriors and their steeds could once more safely encamp under the sky of *sunny Italy*; that the Salii, in honor of their god and illustrious heroes, marched in procession, clashed and brandished their ancilia, and performed their *war-dance* with martial song and frantic mien. The burden of their hymns were the praises of the immortal gods, especially their patron deity, and

according to the author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," devolved the enviable prerogative of preparing the table of the gods;\* of regulating the ceremonies of their annual festival; and of conducting the solemn procession on that thrilling occasion. As soon as the gods had begun to share in the improved knowledge and the more polished manners of their worshippers, and to assume the human form, they were presumed to participate at least in some of the tastes and pleasures, as well as the wants and infirmities, natural to man; and we therefore consider it as one of the most ancient functions of the sacerdotal order, to provide not only ambrosia and nectar, but the more solid and perhaps equally savory viands for the gods, and that Epulones of some kind were early set apart to minister to them in this flattering and important capacity.

As the Lares and some of the Penates, distinguished as the *small gods*, had, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, the supervision of human habitations, and of the connubial ties and offspring, they are justly to be regarded as very ancient deities, because a numerous train of want and cares, requiring divine succor, must soon have developed itself in the domestic relations of mankind. Accordingly we find household gods to have existed in Mesopotamia more than thirty-five centuries ago, as may be seen

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the glory of valiant men, whose feats in arms and noble daring had immortalized their names, and endeared their memory among a warlike people.

\* At such symposial entertainments, the gods were not only the guests, but the *companions* of their votaries at the same table, or as Pausanias says, *Chenoi* and *omotra pezoï*.

by consulting the thirty-first chapter of the book of Genesis. In conclusion, it may be remarked that the East is the prolific hive, whence not only mankind but also their gods and their priests, have emigrated to the West, and that in tracing many of the latter to their sources, we must observe the converse of this egressive movement, and go, for instance, from Rome to Greece, from Greece to Egypt, to Phœnicia, Phrygia, etc. Gillies, the elegant historian of ancient Greece, pronounces the religion of the Romans to have been a *mere plagiarism from the Greeks*, but forgets to add that the people whose religious superiority he so loudly extols, did frequently not scruple to replenish their altars and their temples from the fertile valley of the Nile, without acknowledgment of their indebtedness to those *barbarians*!

## SECTION VI.

THE NATURE OR ATTRIBUTES OF THE GODS, AND THEIR  
MORAL AND PHYSICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
WORLD.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OR ATTRIBUTES OF THE GODS.

THE first feature in the nature of the gods which strikes the attention of the inquirer, is that they are not self-existent, but effects in the great chain of causation. They are also subject to *fate*: the unalterable and all-pervading laws by which the Supreme Being governs the universe. Their mental and corporeal endowments vary in degree and quality; but the highest type of reality under which they appear or are presumed to exist, is the human form, which it transcends, however, in ideal perfections of power, beauty, and excellence. Their character is modified by the influences and mutations of the emotions and passions, which are inherent even in the most exalted order of finite spirits, while their shapes and potency are doomed to changes: this is a fact which is not well defined or clearly expressed in Homer,



though, as it will appear hereafter, it is deeply and indelibly impressed upon the whole symbolical life and relations of the gods. Though the intelligence of the gods is of a superior grade and of ample limits, it is confined; and when omniscience is ascribed to them, it is to be deemed to be such only comparatively. The reason of this is evident; for the gods being the reflection of the human image, they could not at first greatly exceed their original in any of the psychological perfections. As, however, the limits of history and geography widened, and the physical and moral sciences began to be cultivated with some success, the knowledge of the gods also proportionably augmented. It is only after man has attained the necessary skill to generalize his observations and experience, and has found appropriate language to express the inductive processes of reasoning, that his gods assume the embodiment of the higher and nobler efforts of his abstract ideas, divested of every imperfection, and independent of the limits and conditions of time and form: such was the theology of the sages and philosophers of heathen antiquity. Besides, the gods loathe and desire, love and hate, or reason and resolve, similar to mankind; and their motives of action are rather sensual than purely moral, because man himself, long after his recognition and worship of the celestial powers, knew no higher principle of conduct. Even when the vast and complex system of polytheism was completed, and the gods, as the symbolical representations of the laws and attributes of the Almighty, manifested in the works and phenomena of nature, stood before the world in their ultimate

development and awful majesty; and an image of the true God was here and there accurately traced among the manifold deistic forms, the human race generally had just ascended high enough or sunk sufficiently low, to desire or to need the last and highest epiphany of the Supreme Being, in a direct, an unerring, and a world-embracing revelation. But let us contemplate the divinities of heathenism in the fresh and lifelike picture drawn of them by Homer, in his immortal epic poem, the *Iliad*, and anglicized if not adorned, by the stately and melodious rhythm of Pope. Behold, like the august Amphictyons of Greece or the illustrious senators of Rome, the gods deliberate in council, and their decisions are sacred and inviolable. When Jupiter enters the celestial palace, the rest of the deities rise from their thrones to do him homage. Like the sages who deserve their Olympian fame, they generally reason on a proposition before they approve or reject it, unless they are governed by impulse or warped by partiality, which is not seldom the case, showing that the construction of their minds is analogous to our own. The genuine gods are immortal, though their forms, as it will appear in the sequel, undergo diseased and deathlike metamorphoses; but the mixed offspring of gods and men, the demi-gods, are liable to death: Sarpedon, Achilles, etc. The gods and goddesses woo, are won, or resist. Their ordinary marital connections comprise the closest ties of consanguinity, though sometimes they form temporary alliances with mortals. They caress or chastise their infant race, and always take a deep and an abiding interest in their welfare. They are sometimes represented to

be of a colossal size, indicative of superior greatness and excellence: there was not a *goodlier person* among the children of Israel than Saul, who *from his shoulders and upwards, was higher than any of the people*. The Olympian Jupiter had a statue at Olympia in Elis, fifty cubits high, and it was esteemed to be one of the seven wonders of the world; it was the production of Phidias, and stood in the temple of the god, at the end of the Altis or sacred grove. The vast image of Baal or Bel, the Babylonian Jupiter, which was sixty cubits high and six wide, and erected in the plain of Dura at Babylon, is mentioned in the third chapter of the book of Daniel. Another production of huge dimensions and attesting the masterly genius of the Athenian statuary just noticed, was a statue of the goddess Minerva at Athens, "composed," writes Gillies, "of gold and ivory, and twenty-six cubits high,\* represented with the casque, the buckler, the lance, and all her usual emblems; and the warm fancy of the Athenians, enlivened and transported by the graceful majesty of her air and aspect, confounded the painful production of the statuary with the instantaneous creation of Jupiter. To confirm this useful illusion, the crafty priests of the temple carefully washed and brightened the image, whose extraordinary lustre increased the veneration of the multitude, etc." †

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\* Minerva's statue was thirty-nine feet high, calculating the cubit at a foot and a half. — G.

† To keep a master production of art and especially the statue of a divinity clean and bright, and to manifest a becoming in-

When fully exercised, the tread and voice of the gods are terrific. When Posidon, laboring under strong excitement, firmly planted his feet upon the earth, it trembled, the forests shook, and the mountains quaked. Mars, when wounded in the memorable siege of Troy, *bellowed* with pain, —

“Loud as the roar encountering armies  
When shouting millions shake the trembling field;”

and Jove frowns with so prodigious an intensity that the world is clouded and half the sky shrouded in black. He smiles too: so does his august consort Juno, but *spleen* is in her heart; and so supreme is his authority over the immortal denizens of Olympus, that he can punish them even with the pains of *Tartarus*. The gods require rest and sleep, —

“Jove on his couch reclin’d his awful head,  
And Juno slumber’d on the golden bed.”

They also laugh, and so boisterous was the laugh which they once raised at Vulcan’s awkward grace, that the skies shook. Their propensity for the pleasures of the table as well as their fondness for harmonical strains, is not to be mistaken. They feast on ambrosia and nectar, — wine too, does not come amiss, while Apollo plays on the lyre, and the Muses, with voice alternate, accompany the silver sound; and so long do they indulge in the festive glee, that at last it grows dark, when they break up and retire to their starry domes. The grief of Achil-

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terest in *æsthetic* propriety, seem *not necessarily* to warrant the invidious imputation of *crafty*, when applied to the Minervian priests. — G.

les for the loss of his beloved friend Patroclus, excited so lively a sympathy in the breast of Thetis, his divine mother, that she shed a flood of tears. Neptune, also, was touched with sincere sorrow at the untimely fate of his slain grandson. A sight of the carnage at Troy, fills the sensitive soul of Juno with the emotions of a profound sadness; while Apollo is delighted with the sweet pæans sang to his honor: he listens and approves!

All these instances of a deep-felt interest in the sufferings of others, as well as the innocent satisfaction experienced at the melodious expressions of a just and spontaneous homage, are indicative of the existence and force of the nobler sentiments. A god sometimes reproves another, and Jupiter plainly told the stern god of war, that he was unjust, and odious in his sight. Besides, these celestial patrons grant or refuse the prayers of mortals, according to the exigency of the case, or the treatment which they receive at their hands. They are placable and inculcate the forgiveness of injuries; yet owing to some old grudge, Minerva often afflicted Mars' brutal breast with woes.

Surgery is practised in Heaven, and even gods exercise their skill in the Hippocratean art. Diomedes wounds the martial divinity just mentioned, and sends him groaning to the spirit-world: he bleeds and is in a sullen mood. Pæon, physician of the celestial patients, is directed by the great Jupiter, to take charge of the vanquished and suffering god. And thus, —

“With gentle hand the balm he pour’d around,  
And heal’d the immortal flesh, and clos’d the wound.”

Apollo himself condescends to dress the gaping wound of the dying Glaucus, and to breathe new life into his fainting heart. It deserves also to be remarked that whatever is attempted against the will of the divine powers, is unavailing. Rich offerings, however, can accomplish a great deal with them : —

“ Their pow’rs neglected, and no victim slain,  
The walls were rais’d, the trenches sunk in vain.”

When Agamemnon interceded with “ the father of the gods and men,” in behalf of the sad remnant of his unhappy Greeks, it was sufficient thus to call the attention of the god to the past, —

“ To thee my vows were breath’d from ev’ry shore ;  
What altars smok’d not with our victim’s gore ?  
With fat of bulls I fed the constant flame,  
And ask’d destruction to the Trojan name,”

when instantly he sent a fawn, borne by the “ bird of heaven,” an eagle, into the Grecian camp, the pledge of his favor, and a victim for his altars. It is also possible for a deity to be emulous of distinction, and the blue-eyed Athena was deeply sensible of the honor of being first named among all her illustrious compeers. Anxiety causes sleepless nights in heaven as well as upon the earth. The few straggling flowers which we may gather on the bleak mountains of Scandinavian mythology, and which will serve to compare a ruder with a more polished race of gods, we respectfully present as a freewill-offering, to Juno the *imperious queen*, —

“ A goddess born to share the realms above,  
And styl’d the consort of the thund’ring Jove.”



According to M'Pherson, Ossian's spirit of Loda, in Carriethura, is a Scandinavian god, and the same as Odin. His residence was in Inistore, or the Orkney Islands.\* This Norse deity is composed of very ghostly attributes. His form is gloomy and his mien dismal. His eyes appear like flames; his voice is hollow and resembles distant thunder. Even his martial weapons are of the most subtile texture; for his sword is a meteor, and his spear airy. He goes forth on the wings of the wind; but his dwelling is calm above the clouds, and the fields of his rest are pleasant. He is, however, a very puissant god; the people bend before him; he turns the battle in the field of the brave; he looks on the nations, and they vanish; and his nostrils pour the blast of death. Like Mars, the spirit of Loda, with all his superhuman qualities, is vulnerable; feels pain; and expresses his keen sense of it in a most frightful manner. He and Fingal have a quarrel which ends in a deadly encounter, and which is thus graphically portrayed: "He lifted high his shadowy spear! He bent forward his dreadful height. Fingal advancing, drew his sword, the blade of dark-brown Luno. The gleaming path of the steel winds through the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into the air, like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs,

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\* The spirit of Loda was not acknowledged by Fingal as his deity: he did not worship at *the stone of his power*! "There are," says M'Pherson, "many pillars and circles of stones still remaining in the Orkney Islands, known by the name of the stones and circles of Loda;" they were the altars and incipient temples of the gods.

as it rises from the half extinguished furnace. The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind. Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep. They stopped, in their course, with fear: the friends of Fingal started at once; and took their heavy spears. They missed the king; they rose in rage; all their arms resound."

Thor, the thunderer, is the Jupiter of the Scandinavians. His form is the human, and he personates in every respect, though on a preternatural scale, the life and character of man. "The thunder," writes Carlyle, "was his wrath; the gathering of the black clouds is the drawing down of Thor's angry brows; the fire-bolt bursting out of Heaven is the all-rending hammer flung from the hand of Thor: he urges his loud chariot over the mountain tops—that is the peal; wrathfully he 'blows in his red beard;' that is the rustling storm blast before the thunder begins. He engages in all manner of rough manual work, scorns no business for its plebeianism; is ever and anon travelling to the country of the Jötuns, hurrying those chaotic frost-monsters, subduing them, at least straightening and damaging them." This severe and sullen divinity would not only scowl when he was in a rage, but grasp his ponderous hammer, till his *knuckles grew white*. So delicious a drink as nectar, it appears, was unknown among the Norse deities; for Thor, in order that his celestial brethren might brew beer, went once expressly to Jötun land, to seek Hymir's caldron. After much rough tumult, he succeeded in snatching the vessel from the giant, and clapping it on his head, he found that the handles of it reached down to his heels. A

grotesque figure for a god; but the feat indicates a jousisant view which it is pleasing to observe in so stern a being.

Baldur, the *white god*, is the personification of the sun. He is described as being beautiful, just, and benignant; and the early Christian missionaries ventured to trace a resemblance between him and Christ. Baldur, the lovely and the good died, and all nature was tried for a remedy to restore him, but in vain. Frigga, his grief-stricken mother, sent Hermod, one of the sons of Thor, to recover, or at least to see him. Nine days and nine nights the swift messenger of the gods rode with the speed of the winds towards the frigid, dark region of the north pole, when at last, alas! he found him in the shadowy abodes of the dead. He at once recognizes him, speaks with him, but he cannot be delivered; Hela — hell, is inexorable! I will only add that the death of this most amiable and charming of all the Scandinavian divinities, is a mere metamorphosis in his planetary existence, and that the import of this myth is the symbolical representation of the sun at the winter solstice. In conclusion, it may be remarked, that in the image which the character of the gods presents to the mind, we discover greater physical than moral perfections; for though their moral attributes are distinguished for many admirable virtues, some of which are truly divine, and far exceed the highest efforts of unaided humanity, yet in their totality they fall far short of ideal perfection. To give a condensed outline of the general nature of the gods, founded on the exoteric creed of polytheism, they were mighty, yet they suffered; just,

yet not without selfishness; merciful, yet partial or un pitying; holy, yet peccable; wise, yet not free from error. Suffice it to say, that it is a maxim in moral theology, that the ideas of mankind in respect to the gods and even the Supreme Being, are more or less the reflex personifications of their own psychological development.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THEIR MORAL AND PHYSICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORLD.

IN treating of the administration of the gods, it will be necessary, in the first place, accurately to define the nature of the government under which they exercise their lofty functions. A republican form of government, however desirable it may be in the civil organizations of mankind, is impracticable in the social relations of the gods, because they are not by nature *all equal*, but of different grades of rank and power, as well as in trust of distinct duties and relations. Nor is an oligarchy admissible among the kinds of polity which are best adapted to them; for this species of supreme authority confines the helm of state to a select number among the constituents, which, though feasible among mortals, would be absolute death to the superior powers. The reason is, there is not one of them who is not obliged

or determined in his turn, to bear part of the burden and enjoy some of the honors incident to the administration of the world, however inferior might be the post which he should fill in a nicely graduated system of spiritual dignities and ritual distinctions. This judicious arrangement, it will be perceived, makes them all essentially necessary and important parts of one unbroken, stupendous whole. Such being the facts of the case, a monarchical form of government is the only available one, under the existing conditions of confederation among the gods; and accordingly both mythology and history, poetry and the fine arts, inform us that they have always recognized its superiority over every other form of deistic polity, and scrupulously carried out its principles in all their connections with the universe or with mankind.

The principal deities who composed the celestial monarchies of polytheism, were seldom confined in their administrative functions to a single province or nation, but extended their dominion over the remotest parts of the habitable globe under various names and modified rituals. The uninitiated in mythological science, is apt to contemplate different gods in the Jupiter or Zeus of the Greeks and Romans; the Osiris of the Egyptians; the Bel of the Assyrians; the Thor and the Odin of the Teutonic people; the Brahma of the Hindoos; and the Ormuzd of the Persians, etc.; whereas they are essentially the same. Likewise the Isis of the Nile, the Hertha of the Germans, and the Ceres of the Greeks; the Astarte of the Syrians, the Phœnicians, the Venus of Greece, and the Freyja of Scandina-



via; Juno, *the queen of heaven*, and Frigga, *the mother of the gods*; the Mitra of the Persians, and the Vesta of the Hellenic and Roman people, agree respectively in the main features of a common character, and concordant functions. Even this list of goddesses can be legitimately so abbreviated as to resolve all these fair beings into one, when we shall have but a single divine pair. In short, at the foundation of every well arranged system of theogony, there were but few *radical* deities, and the most of the gods and goddesses of the popular creed, were but the evolutions and modifications of the primary divinities—their sons and daughters: themselves under new forms and relations. Thus a few male and female deities of a benignant nature with their offspring, who responded to other names and functions; and a small number of malignant divinities, together with their progenital ramifications, constituted *esoterically* the concise nomenclature of the theogonic family. Owing to conquests, when the victors would impose their gods on the vanquished, or to colonizations and emigrations, when the gods of the mother country would accompany their votaries, more than one tribe or nation worshipped the same deities even in name; as, the Greeks and the Romans on the one hand, and the Assyrians, the Phœnicians, and the Carthaginians on the other. As has been stated, there were malignant divinities who had an empire of their own, and whose power, though fearfully extensive, was restricted within proper limits by their benignant antagonists. The most notorious among them were Ahriman, Moisasur, Loki, and Typhon, and his mischievous spouse, Nephthys:



the first resided in the country of the Magi; the second on the shores of the Indus and the Ganges; the third among the pines and glaciers of Scandinavia; and the fourth or the wedded pair, in the deserts bordering from the east and the west on the valley of the lower Nile. Beside these distinguishing features in the political organization of the gods, each celestial power usually presided over a particular branch of the deific government. On Mercury devolved the duty to be the messenger of his divine compeers; Bacchus bore sway over the convivial cup and its orgian rites; and stern Mars found his post wherever the cry of battle and the clash of arms resounded in martial discord. Apollo presided over the fine arts, medicine, music, poetry, and eloquence; while Neptune stretched his pronged sceptre over the green waters and mountain-waves of *old ocean*. Ceres introduced the cereal grains among mankind, and guided and fostered agrarian pursuits; to be the queen of love and the mistress of grace and soft delights, became none so well as Venus; Flora betrayed her refined taste in the cultivation of flowers; and the elastic and sprightly Diana strung her bow in the sports and fatigues of the chase.

Such is a brief outline of the social constitution of the gods, and such the preliminary evidence of the providential care which they exercised over the pursuits and the interests of mortals. A few facts, derived from the records of history and mythology, will serve to enlighten our judgment and confirm our convictions. According to the mythological system of the Hindoos, Vichnou, in the capacity of preserver of the world, appeared upon the earth

whenever vice and tyranny threatened to endanger the safety of mankind. Ten incarnations in the shape of man, beast, or monster, attested the deep interest which the beneficent god has taken in the happiness of the human race, and the paramount importance which he attached to virtue. In addition to these repeated acts of redemption, Brahma, the creator of the world, in order to facilitate the exalted destiny of man, kindly gave him his laws, and encouraged him to persevere in a holy life, in the hope of a glorious reunion with Parabrama: the illimitable of time. Cæsar and Cicero, two of the most illustrious Romans: the one perhaps unrivalled as a military chieftain, the other, as a forensic orator, both acknowledge a moral supervision of the gods in the life and transactions of man. The former, in a speech addressed to the Helvetian ambassadors, headed by Divico, having called their attention to the refractory conduct of their nation, apprises them of the fate which infallibly awaited those whose unrepented guilt was similar to their own, and bids them remember, "That the immortal gods were sometimes wont to grant long impunity, and a great run of prosperity to men, whom they pursued with the punishment of their crimes, that, by the sad reverse of their condition, vengeance might fall the heavier."\* The latter, in that part of his work on the *Highest Good and Evil*, dedicated to Marcus Brutus, having stated that though evil-doers might flatter themselves to have nothing to fear on account of their conduct, from the knowledge or the

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\* Duncan.

justice of mankind, they nevertheless, "Shuddered at the thought that the gods knew it; and that the torment which gnawed day and night at their hearts, was felt by them to be a punishment inflicted by the immortal gods." It may farther be remarked that in the treatise of this author, on the *Nature of the Gods*, the object is no other but to prove and justify a superintending providence of the deities; and I need not inform the classic reader with what success he executed the task. But it is needless to cite authorities in proof of a subject which, as soon as the gods are admitted into the religious creeds of mankind, must be deemed self-evident. For on no other principle can the universal institution of sacrificial rites and ritual observances, as the most natural and appropriate forms of divine worship, be accounted for, but upon that of an undying conviction that the celestial powers take a decided and unceasing interest in human affairs; that human happiness or misery depends on their instrumentality; and that all natural religion, together with all its various phases and expressions; its faith, its hopes, and its fears, owes its origin and perpetuity to there cognition of this momentous truth. To this day, the Delay Lama of Thibet, believed to be the incarnation of Fo, is worshipped not only by the Thibetans, but also by a great part of Tartary, under the firm persuasion of his zealous votaries that he blesses the present and reveals the future to them; and that in all things, he controls their destiny by his providential supervision. Hence it is that they fall prostrate before the embodied god and kiss him, papal-like, with all the marks of a profound veneration.

If we take a more comprehensive view of the subject under discussion, it will resolve itself into the important proposition, that the gods being virtually the symbolical representations of the effects and phenomena of the laws and causations of the universe, and these being the result of the creative wisdom and energy of the God of gods, and constituting Divine Providence, it follows that the faith of the heathens, attributing providential government of the world and of mankind to the gods, was based upon eternal truth. Hence of Jehovah — the great original of all, and of Jove — the putative father of the gods, we may say in the expressive language of Virgil, “*Omnia plena* ;” or in that of the bard of Twickenham, —

“ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul ;  
That, chang’d through all, and yet in all the same ;  
Great in the earth, as in th’ ethereal frame ;  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent ;  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;  
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :  
To him, no high, no low, no great, no small :  
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.”

## SECTION VII.

THE ORACLES, DIVINATIONS OR AUGURIES, AND ARUSPICY  
OF HEATHENISM, AND THE FUTURE JUDGMENT OR RE-  
WARDS AND PUNISHMENT DISPENSED BY THE GODS.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE ORACLES, DIVINATIONS OR AUGURIES, AND ARUSPICY  
OF HEATHENISM.

OF all the ancient oracles, those of Apollo at Delphi, and of Jupiter Ammon in the Lybian desert, were the most celebrated. In the opinion of Herodotus, the origin of oracles is to be traced to the prolific soil of Egypt, where, also, the theogony or generation of the gods, seems to have flourished in the most unbounded luxuriance. "The two oracles of Egyptian Thebes and of Dodona," says he, "have entire resemblance to each other. The art of divination, as now practised in our temples, is thus derived from Egypt; at least the Egyptians were the first who introduced the sacred festivals, processions, and supplications, and from them the Greeks were instructed." \* It appears, also,

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\* Belæ.

from the same author, that the first oracle in Greece was founded at Dodonā, by a priestess of the Theban Jupiter, who had been carried off by Phœnician pirates, and sold into that country. "Her attendance on the temple," writes Gillies, "had taught her some of the arts by which this pretension was maintained. She chose the dark shade of a venerable oak ; delivered mysterious answers to the admiring multitude ; her reputation increased ; success gained her associates ; a temple rose to Jupiter, and was surrounded by houses for his ministers." To this it may be added, that not only shrines which attested the skill of human art, but also groves, grottos, and caverns, were the favorite resorts of oracular responses ; and that in a short time, after the introduction of the first tripod into northern Greece, the spirit of vaticination rapidly spread over various provinces inhabited by the Hellenic race.

After these remarks, we again listen to the instructions of the historian of "Ancient Greece," who thus continues : "During the heroic ages, indeed, as illustrious and pious men believed themselves, on important occasions, honored with the immediate presence and advice of their heavenly protectors, the secondary information of priests and oracles was less generally regarded and esteemed. But in proportion as the belief ceased that the gods appeared in human form, or the supposed visits at least of these celestial beings seemed less frequent and familiar, the office of priests became more important and respectable, and the confidence in oracles continually gained ground. At length these admired institutions, being considered as the chief and almost only mode of



communication with supernatural powers, acquired a degree of influence calculated to control every principle of authority, whether civil or sacred." Speaking of the Delphian oracle, which enjoyed the protection and superintendence of the Amphictyonic council,\* he adds: "But the inhabitants of Delphi, who, if we may use the expression, were the original proprietors of the oracle, always continued to direct the religious ceremonies, and to conduct the important business of prophecy. It was *their* province alone to determine at what time and on what occasion, the Pythia should mount the sacred tripod, to receive the prophetic steams,† by which she communicated with Apollo. When overflowing with the heavenly inspiration, she uttered the confused words, or rather frantic sounds, irregularly suggested by the impulse of the god; the Delphians collected these sounds, reduced them into order, animated

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\* The celebrated council of the Amphictyons was originally composed of twelve persons, who represented the Grecian States. They generally met twice every year at Delphi, though sometimes they convened at Thermopylæ. The object of their institution was to adjudicate in all cases of dissension or grievances, which might arise between the different States of Greece. Their decisions were universally esteemed sacred and inviolable.

† These prophetic steams were sulphureous vapors, emitted from the crevices of a profound cavern within the temple, over which the priestess called Pythia, sat bare on a three-legged stool, known as the tripod. These vapors powerfully affected the brain, and were deemed to be the sure and hallowed media of divine inspiration. The oracles of Greece were usually delivered in hexameter verse, and as the origin of this poetic measure was ascribed to the Delphian Apollo, it was also called the theological or Pythian metre. — G.

them with sense, and adorned them with harmony, etc.”

Gibbon charges the ancient oracles with a public conviction of deceit and fraud, and adds with evident delight, that Constantine the Great imposed upon them an ignominious silence; but while this accomplished historian condemns the vices, he forgets to be just to the virtues of this venerable institution. Without presuming to ignore its inherent defects or ultimate corruptions, I shall briefly notice its benign influence on human society as it has been portrayed by the candid and judicious Pölitz, in his admirable *Weltgeschichte*. “The oracles which exercised so important an influence in Greece, especially during the first periods of civilization,” says he, “not unfrequently guided public opinion and the spirit of national enterprise, with distinguished wisdom. Preëminent among the rest, the oracle at Delphi enjoyed a world-wide renown; and there it was that the wealth and the treasures of more than one continent, were concentrated. Its responses revealed many a tyrant, and foretold his fate. Many an unhappy being was saved through its means, or directed by its counsel. It encouraged useful institutions, and communicated the discoveries in art or science under the sanction of a divine authority. And lastly, by its doctrines and example, it caused the moral law to be kept holy, and civil rights to be respected.”

M. Mallet, in his “Northern Antiquities,” speaking of the addictedness of the Scandinavians to divination, auguries, etc., thus proceeds: “They had oracles, like the people of Italy and Greece, and

these oracles were not less revered, nor less famous than theirs. It was generally believed, either that the gods and goddesses, or, more commonly, that the three destinies, whose names I have given elsewhere, delivered out these oracles in their temples. That of Upsal was as famous for its oracles as its sacrifices. There were also celebrated ones in Dalia, a province of Sweden; in Norway and Denmark." "It was," says Saxo the Grammarian, "a custom with the ancient Danes to consult the oracles of the Parcæ, concerning the future destiny of children newly born. Accordingly Fridleif, being desirous to know that of his son Olaus, entered into the temple of the gods to pray; and, being introduced into the sanctuary, he saw three goddesses upon so many seats. The first, who was of a beneficent nature, granted the infant beauty and the gift of pleasing. The second gave him a noble heart. But the third, who was envious and spiteful, to spoil the work of her sisters, imprinted on him the stain of covetousness."

It should seem that the idols or statues of the gods and goddesses delivered these oracles *vivâ voce*. In an ancient Icelandic chronicle we read of one Indria, who went from home to wait for Thorstein, his enemy. "Thorstein," says the author, "upon his arrival, entered into the temple. In it was a stone, cut probably into a statue, which he had been accustomed to worship; he prostrated himself before it, and prayed to it—to inform him of his destiny. Indria, who stood without, heard the stone chant forth these verses: 'It is for the last time, it is with feet drawing near to the grave, that thou art come to

this place : for it is most certain, that, before the sun ariseth, the valiant Indria shall make thee feel his hatred.'” The people persuaded themselves, sometimes, that these idols answered by a gesture or a nod of the head, which signified that they hearkened to the prayers of their supplicants.

To remove the veil which hides our vision from the future, has been attempted with more or less success in all ages of the world ; and therefore the propensity to pry into the lap of time, contemplated as one of the faculties of the human mind, comes recommended to us under the sanction of God. To regard or deride it as the corrupt offspring and lingering remains of a superstitious age, and hastily to condemn it as unworthy a sober investigation, would be as unphilosophical as it is wrong. That there has been true prophecy, not one that believes in the inspired word of the Almighty, will presume to deny ; and hence vaticination in its nobler and more perfect form at least, has been legitimated by Divine approval. Zwinglius, the Swiss reformer, attested the comprehensiveness of his faith in the providence of the Supreme Being, in the cosmopolitan doctrine that the Holy Ghost was not entirely excluded from the more worthy portion of the heathen world. Admitting its truth, we cannot easily conceive a valid reason why a heathen thus favored, should not be capable of true prophecy. Balaam was a noted diviner and a heathen, and yet his predictions concerning the Israelites were verified. And he can by no means be considered as one of the best specimens of heathenism, yet the son of Beor, as the history of the case clearly shows, evidently acted under a divine

impulse.<sup>3</sup> By the art of necromancy, *the witch at Endor* pretended to reveal future events, and as far as Saul is concerned, her revelation was sadly accomplished. This is certainly a singular phenomenon in the Jewish theocracy, and the prophetic element which it contained, may be explained by supposing that this artful woman in the guise of Samuel, made a happy guess, or that God for some wise purpose, converted her execrable art to his own interest; though it cannot be denied that such a supposition involves a suspension or a violation of his own laws on *kako-magia*.

In respect to augury and aruspicy, it is not to be imagined that the priests who presided over these branches of the polytheistic creed, when society had attained a high state of civilization, any longer seriously believed that the flight of a bird, the cackling of a hen, or the viscera of a beast, could foreshadow future events. On the contrary, it may be safely asserted that these divinative arts, so well calculated to inspire awe and homage in the breasts of the multitude, were used at least to a considerable extent as pedagogical vehicles, sanctified by time and opinion, and through which reason and religion declared the result of their experience and observations. The term augur denotes a soothsayer or diviner, and means one that judges of the will of the gods as it regards impending or future events from the observations made on various objects and phenomena in nature, according to certain augurial laws. Kennett derives it either from the motion and actions, or the chirping and chattering of birds. There were different kinds of augury, which are founded either



on the observations of the heavens; of various birds and beasts — *oiōnistike* and *zoo-manteia*; and, lastly, of the usual incidents of life. If a thundergust arose, the augur took notice whether it came from the right or the left hand, according to the four temples or quarters into which the heavens were divided for the use of this art; whether the number of strokes were even or odd, etc. So important was this species of augury deemed to be, that only the master of the augurial college could take it. When beasts, either wild or tame, constituted the subject of augury, it was of importance to observe whether they appeared in a strange place, crossed the road, or ran to the right or to the left side of their line of progression. The omens taken from the flight or the notes of birds, decided nothing unless they were confirmed by a repetition of the token. Besides, the sneezing or stumbling of a person; the hearing of mysterious voices or seeing of *apparitions* by him; the falling of salt upon the table or the spilling of wine upon one's clothes, etc., were serious subjects for augurial prognostication, even among a people whose senators clothed in their robes of state, and sitting in silent majesty in the forum, the ancient Gauls took to be gods! Domestic fowls were especially kept for the benefit of this important profession, and the manner in which they took or refused their food, determined the prosperous or adverse character of the omen, and might hasten or suspend the downfall of an empire.\* *Ophi-manteia*

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\* Beloe on Herodotus remarks: "Some birds furnished omens from their chattering, as crows, owls, etc.; others from the direc-



was also embraced in the category of the augur's duties, as it appears from the following passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, thus rendered by Dryden:—

‘ At Aulis, with united powers, they meet;  
But there, cross winds or calms detain'd the fleet.  
Now, while they raise an altar on the shore,  
And Jove with solemn sacrifice adore,  
A boding sign the priests and people see:  
A snake of size immense ascends a tree,  
And in the leafy summit spied a nest,  
Which o'er her callow young a sparrow press'd;  
Eight were the birds, unfledged; their mother flew  
And hover'd round her care, but still in view,  
Till the fierce reptile first devour'd the brood;  
Then seiz'd the fluttering dam, and drank her blood.  
This dire ostenent the fearful people view;  
Calchas alone, by Phœbus taught, foreknew  
What heaven decreed; and with a smiling glance,  
Thus gratulates to Greece her happy chance:  
‘ Oh Argives, we shall conquer; Troy is ours,  
But long delays shall first afflict our powers;  
Nine years of labor the nine birds portend,  
The tenth shall in the town's destruction end.’ ”

The aruspices had their name from looking upon the altars—*ab aris aspiciendis*. The *ominose* art which they practised, was designated by the term

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tion in which they flew, as eagles, vultures, hawks, etc. An eagle seen to the right was fortunate. The sight of an eagle was supposed to foretell to Tarquinius Priscus that he should obtain the crown; it predicted, also, the conquests of Alexander; and the loss of their dominions to Tarquin the Proud, and Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse. A raven seen on the left hand was unfortunate—

Sæpe sinistra cava prædixit ab ilice cornix. — *Virgil*.”

aruspicy. The laws of this species of prognostication demanded an investigation of the following subjects: First, the sacrificial victims before they were cut up; secondly, the entrails of those victims after they were cut up — *extispicia*; thirdly, the flame and smoke of the fire over which they were consumed — *puramanteia* and *kapnomanteia*; and fourthly, the flour or bran, frankincense, wine, and water, used in the sacrifice, and the taste, smell, color, and quantity of which, was to be carefully ascertained and accurately balanced. The science of augury and aruspicy is of so ancient a date that mythology has not hesitated to trace its origin to Tages, a grandson of Jupiter, who it is affirmed was the first who taught it to the Etrurians. It is said that Tages was found by Tuscan ploughmen in the form of a clod, when gradually assuming the shape and faculties of a perfect man, he began to foretell the future; a fact to which Ovid thus alludes:—

“And, Tages named by natives of the place,  
Taught arts prophetic to the Tuscan race.”

The ancient Scandinavians had diviners of both sexes, who bore the name of prophets, and as such were the objects of profound reverence. Some of them were said to have familiar spirits who never left them, and whom they consulted under the form of little idols; others dragged the ghosts of the departed from their tombs, and forced the dead to tell them what would happen: the Skalds or bards pretended to possess the power — through the means of certain songs, to be able to communicate with the dead, and to interrogate the past or reveal the future

for the benefit of the living. The Runic characters of these people were employed as the most potent media to presage future events, and augury and aruspicy in their various ramifications, had attained among them to the rank and influence of a sacred mystery, full of deep significance, and the certain interpreters of destiny. "There were letters, or Runes," writes Mallet, translated by Bishop Percy, "to procure victory—to preserve from prison—to relieve women in labor—to cure bodily diseases—to dispel evil thoughts from the mind—to dissipate melancholy—and to soften the severity of a cruel mistress. They employed pretty nearly the same characters for all these different purposes, but they varied the order and combination of the letters; they wrote them either from right to left, or from top to bottom, or in form of a circle, or contrary to the course of the sun, etc. I have already remarked that they had often no other end, in sacrificing human victims, than to know what was to happen by inspection of their entrails, by the effusion of their blood, and by the greater or less degree of celerity with which they sunk to the bottom of the water. The same motive engaged them to lend an attentive ear to the singing of birds, which some diviners boasted a power of interpreting, etc."

The Druids of Britain had the seat of their aruspical mysteries in the sombre gloom of consecrated groves. It was in the midst of them that they sacrificed the prisoners of war and the sacred victims; and that they foretold the course of future events from the course which the crimson current assumed around the reeking altars. According to Tacitus,

the rude and warlike sires of the Germanic people, must have been rare adepts in the mystic rites of divination. "Their attention to auguries, and the practice of divining by lot," says he, "is conducted with a degree of superstition not excelled by any other nation. Their mode of proceeding by lots is wonderfully simple. The branch of a fruit-tree is cut into small pieces, which, being all distinctly marked, are thrown at random on a white garment. If a question of public interest be pending, the priest of the canton performs the ceremony; if it be nothing more than a private concern, the master of the family officiates. With fervent prayers offered up to the gods, his eyes devoutly raised to heaven, he holds up three times each segment of a twig, and as the marks rise in succession, interprets the decrees of fate. If appearances prove unfavorable, there ends all consultation for that day: if, on the other hand, the chances are propitious, they require, for greater certainty, the sanction of auspices. The well-known superstition, which in other countries consults the flight and notes of birds, is also established in Germany; but to receive intimation of future events from horses, is the peculiar credulity of the country.\* For this purpose a number of milk-white steeds, unprofaned by mortal labor, is constantly maintained at public expense, and placed to pasture in the religious groves. When occasion requires, they are harnessed to a sacred chariot, and the priest, accompanied by the king, or chief of the State, attends to watch the motions

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\* This is an error, as the sequel of this chapter will show.— G.

and the neighing of the horses. No other mode of augury is received with such implicit faith by the people, the nobility, and the priesthood. The horses, upon these solemn occasions, are supposed to be the organs of the gods, and the priests their favored interpreters. They have still another way of prying into futurity, to which they have recourse, when anxious to know the issue of an important war. They seize, by any means in their power, a captive from the adverse nation, and commit him in single combat with a champion selected from their own army. Each is provided with weapons after the manner of his country, and the victory, wherever it falls, is deemed a sure prognostic of the event.”\*

Cæsar informs us that among the Gauls, animated already at that early age, it may be presumed, by a spirit of inherent gallantry, the matrons of the family assumed the duty and enjoyed the honor, of illustrating and defining the future by die or lot. Among the Persians, horses generally were deemed sacred to the sun, but white horses especially were held in the highest estimation, and treated with the most delicate care, as the peculiar favorites of the deity. To the neighing of his horse, brought about by a trick of his groom, Darius owed his elevation to the Persian throne. Thunder in winter, and earthquakes at any season of the year, the Scythians taught to be ominous. “They have among them,” writes the father of history, “a great number who practise the art of divination; for this purpose they use a number of willow twigs, in this manner: they bring large bun-

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\* Murphy, *translator Taciti.*

dles of these together, and having united them, dispose them one by one on the ground, each bundle at a distance from the rest. This done, they pretend to foretell the future, during which they take up the bundles separately, and tie them again together. This mode of divination is hereditary among them. The enaries, or "effeminate men," affirm that the art of divination was taught them by the goddess Venus. They take, also, the leaves of the lime-tree, which dividing into three parts, they twine round their fingers; they then unbind it, and exercise the art to which they pretend." \*

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE FUTURE JUDGMENT OR REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS DISPENSED BY THE GODS.

I HAVE now to request as a particular favor, that the reader will accompany me across the Stygian lake, as there are some eminent personages in the dismal place just beyond it, whose character and functions demand a closer scrutiny. A small fee for Charon, the ferryman, and a little courage, are the only preliminaries which are necessary on the present occasion, to insure a safe passage; but should a defunct ghost desire to enter into the lower

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\* Beloe.



regions, he must take the precaution to be first buried, otherwise he will be doomed to wander about the shores of Hades during a whole centenary period of time, before he can be allowed an entrance into the palace of Pluto: this curious fact sufficiently accounts for the existence of the many apparitions which have always disturbed the fancy and alarmed the fears of the credulous! The kingdom of hell is governed by his royal majesty Pluto, a son of Saturn and Ops, and includes within its ample limits the whole subterranean world. Its entrance is through the Avernian cave, near Syracuse, in Sicily. It was here where Pluto descended to his shadowy realm, bearing with him the fair Proserpine as the prize of his successful gallantry; and it was here whither the people of Syracuse resorted to commemorate the daring event, in the observance of annual festivals, in which multitudes of both sexes participated. Here, too, it was whence, according to Virgil, Æneas and the Sibyl set out on their sub-mundane excursion.\* The usual tenebriose ensigns of majesty which distinguish Pluto, are a key instead of a sceptre, and an ebony crown. His horses and chariot are black as night. When the dead have once arrived in his uninviting dominions, the gates are locked, and regress into life is impossible.

This awful divinity bears various cognomens,

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\* Pope Gregory the Great, regarded the crater of Mount Ætna as the outer gate of Hades. The same honor has been conferred on Hekla, by north-European authors. The ancient Persians located it in Okesra, a region celebrated for its innumerable *jets of naphtha* everywhere bounding forth in spontaneous combustion.

which either denote the nature of his functions or the attributes of his empire. He is called Pluto, on account of the wealth which lies hidden in the bowels of the earth; Hades, in consequence of the gloomy and melancholy appearance of his abode, or because he sits in darkness and obscurity, and is invisible to his airy subjects; Agesilaus, for he conducts mortals to the infernal regions; Orcus, inasmuch as he hastens the decay and death of mankind, or brings up the rear in the last, sad moments of their lives; and Summanus, from the fact that he is the chief of all the deities in the Stygian territories, and principal governor of the departed spirits. Life and death are in the hands of the inexorable god, and he prolongs or shortens the career of mortals, according to his supreme pleasure. In Hades, criminal causes continually crowd the sombre tribunal of the stern and inflexible dispensers of justice. All wicked persons receive their exit from the stage of time: the prelude to final judgment, from the impartial hands of Nona, Decima, and Morta—the three Fates, thus denominated because they control the past, present, and future, according to fate, which Cicero affirms, implies all that is to happen agreeably to the decrees of God. They also respond to the appellation of Parcæ, either because they spare no person, or because they distribute good and bad gifts to man at his birth. To their delicate fingers the *fatal* thread of life is officially confided. The three judges, Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æcus, unmoved by pity, deaf to bribes, and disregardful of the distinctions of age, sex, or rank, pass sentence of condemnation on the

guilty shades; and the three Furies carry it into execution. These goddesses, charged with such important penal functions, are frightful beings; for though they have the fair visages of women, their looks and official insignia inspire terror. They are generally represented with a grim aspect, bloody garments, and serpents wreathing around their heads and the upper part of their bodies. They hold a burning torch in one hand, and a whip of scorpions in the other, while dismay, rage, paleness, and death, compose their retinue and obey their behests.

There is a place in the Plutonian empire which, as Virgil informs us in the *Æneid*, teems with many rare and charming natural advantages, and displays a scenery of preternatural loveliness: abounding everywhere in inexhaustible sources of the most varied and exquisite delights; and which is known as the Elysium or *Elysii Campi*, the abode or the fields of the blessed.\* It might be presumed that all those

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\* The ancients were far from being unanimous as to the precise locality of the Elysian fields. Some taught that they were to be sought near the African coast, in the Atlantic ocean, among a cluster of islands which they designated as the Fortunate; others placed them in the island of Leuce, in the Euxine sea; and Virgil, as a good Roman, hesitated not to point out Italy as the fittest country that could overlie so felicitous a spot. The poet Lucian assigned to them a situation near the moon, but Plutarch, more orthodox as well as true to prescription, was content to find his paradise in the centre of the earth. In one thing, however, all agreed, that it was a most enchanting region, with bowers forever green, delightful meadows, and pleasant streams; with a balmy air, a serene sky, and a salubrious climate; with birds continually warbling in the groves, and a heaven illustrated by a more glorious sun and brighter stars than the similar orbs which illumine the path of mortals.

who had once entered this ecstatic abode, where the pleasures of the soul are at once so refined and so innocent, and where happiness is apparently so complete, would always remain in it, but this, according to some authors, is not the case. In process of time many of the happy spirits must return upon the the earth, and pass into new bodies; and that they may not mourn the loss of their blissful state, nor recoil from the miseries which await them in this world, from the bitter recollections of a past life, they drink of the waters of Lethe, one of the rivers of hell.\*

The metempsychosis or doctrine of the transmigration of the soul into different bodies, as taught by Pythagoras, without reference to its Plutonian or Elysian existence, which the Samian philosopher seems to have considered as the mere poetic embellishments of the future state, is thus described by Ovid, in the language of Dryden:—

“What feels the body when the soul expires,  
By time corrupted, or consumed by fires?  
Nor dies the spirit, but new life repeats  
In other forms, and only changes seats.  
Ev’n I, who these mysterious truths declare,  
Was once Euphorbus in the Trojan war;  
My name and lineage I remember well,  
And how in fight by Sparta’s king I fell.  
In Argive Juno’s fame I late beheld  
My buckler hung on high, and own’d my former shield.  
Then death, so call’d, is but old matter dress’d  
In some new figure, and a varied vest:

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\* ————— Animæ, quibus altera fato  
Corpora debentur, Lethæi ad fluminis undam  
Securos latices et longa oblivia potent. — *Virgiliæ Æneis*, 6.

Thus all things are but alter'd, nothing dies;  
 And here and there the unbodied spirit flies,  
 By time, or force, or sickness dispossess'd,  
 And lodges, where it lights, in man or beast;  
 Or hunts without, till ready limbs it finds,  
 And actuates those according to their kind;  
 From tenement to tenement is toss'd,  
 The soul is still the same, the figure only lost:  
 And, as the soften'd wax new seals receives,  
 This face assumes, and that impression leaves;  
 Now call'd by one, now by another name;  
 The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.  
 So death, so called, can but the form deface;  
 The immortal soul flies out in empty space,  
 To seek her fortune in some other place.  
 Then let not piety be put to flight,  
 To please the taste of glutton appetite;  
 But suffer inmate souls secure to dwell,  
 Lest from their seats your parents you expel;  
 With rabid hunger feed upon your kind,  
 Or from a beast dislodge a brother's mind."\*

Such only of the Elysian inhabitants who were distinguished for their exalted virtues, were exempt from transmigration, and were at last admitted into the society of the gods, while their *idola* or *simulacra*, according to the fertile fancy of the poets, continued to reside in the lower regions. The ancient Mexicans, as it appears from the statement of Kaiser, taught the existence of numerous spirit-abodes, into one of which the innocent shades of children were re-

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\* Pythagoras and his disciples were as rigid *vegetarians* as the most orthodox Hindoos, or the strictest members of the Grahamite school, and peremptorily prohibited the use of animal food as a violation of the laws of humanity, and a flagrant outrage against the metempsychosial destiny of the soul. — G.



ceived; into another, — the sun, the valiant and illustrious souls of heroes ascended; while the corrupt and hideous ghosts of the wicked were doomed to grovel and pine in subterranean caverns. Nine heavens served to circumscribe their fanciful visions and ardent dreams of future bliss.\* The Greenlanders were contented to predicate the doctrine of but one future Eden, which they located in the abyss of the ocean, and to which skilful fishermen alone might dare to aspire with the confident hope of success. The relentless martial spirit of the Appalachian Indians, proclaimed itself in consigning their cowardly red brethren to the profound chasms of their native mountains, where, overwhelmed by snow and ice, they fell victims to the tender mercy of shaggy and ferocious bears. The aborigines of America were unanimous in their belief in the immortality of the soul, and a happy state hereafter, somewhat similar to the Elysian bliss of the Greeks and Romans; but of a Hades, they know little and speak seldom, and the savage-like Appalachian hell just described, is one of the remarkable exceptions in the general creed. “All,” writes Doctor Robertson, “entertain hopes of a future and more happy state, where they shall be forever exempt from the

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\*The last month in the year of the Mexican aborigines, was called Izcalli, which we are told by Clavigero, signifies resurrection, and its hieroglyphical symbol was a man holding a child by the head. The hell of these Indians was denominated *mictlan*, from *mictlampa* — the north, and it was located in the higher regions of the northern hemisphere: the place of destruction and palingenesis of many of the ancients. — G.



calamities which embitter human life in its present condition. This future state they conceive to be a delightful country, blessed with perpetual spring, whose forests abound with game, whose rivers swarm with fish, where famine is never felt, and uninterrupted plenty shall be enjoyed without labor or toil.

But as men, in forming their first imperfect ideas concerning the invisible world, suppose that there they shall continue to feel the same desires, and to be engaged in the same occupations, as in the present world; they naturally ascribe eminence and distinction, in that state, to the same qualities and talents which are here the objects of their esteem. The Americans, accordingly, allotted the highest place in their country of spirits, to the skilful hunter, the adventurous and successful warrior, and to such as had tortured the greatest number of captives, and devoured their flesh. These notions were so prevalent, that they gave rise to a universal custom, which is, at once, the strongest evidence that the Americans believe in a future state, and the best illustration of what they expect there. As they imagine that departed spirits begin their career anew in the world whither they are gone, that their friends may not enter upon it defenceless and unprovided, they bury together with the bodies of the dead their bow, their arrows, and other weapons used in hunting or war; they deposit in their tombs the skins of stuffs of which they make garments, Indian corn, manioc, venison, domestic utensils, and whatever is reckoned among the necessaries in their simple mode of life. In some provinces, upon the decease of a

cazique or chief, a certain number of his wives, of his favorites, and of his slaves, were put to death, and interred together with him, that he might appear with the same dignity in his future station, and be waited upon by the same attendants. This persuasion is so deep-rooted, that many of the deceased person's retainers offer themselves voluntary victims, and court the privilege of accompanying their departed masters, as a high distinction." To these graphic and faithful delineations of a creed, strikingly characteristic of an interesting and a once numerous race of people, we add the naive and pathetic effusions of Pope, the author of the immortal production — *the Essay on Man*, on the same attractive subject:—

“Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk, or milky-way;  
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n,  
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,  
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold!  
*To be*, contents his natural desire,  
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;  
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company.”

The *feralia* was a festival instituted among the ancient Romans in honor of deceased mortals, whose object was to alleviate their future suffering while it entertained them with festive cheer. “It

continued," writes Smith, in his "Festivals, Games, and Amusements," "for eleven days, during which time presents were carried to the graves of the dead, whose *manes*, it was universally believed, came and hovered over their tombs, and feasted upon the provisions which had been placed there by the hand of piety and affection. It was also believed that during this period they enjoyed rest and liberty, and a suspension from their punishment in the infernal regions." From the notion of the Greeks in the pre-Homeric ages that the souls of deceased warriors delighted in human blood, their funeral games and ceremonies were often of the most cruel description; and hence we find that to revenge and appease or regale the shade of his friend Patroclus, Achilles slew twelve of the young Trojan nobility at his funeral-pile.\*

The Persian creed of a future state and retribution, next deserves our careful attention. It teaches an intermediate state between death and the resurrection, which depends for its degree of happiness or utter misery, on the judicial decision of Ormuzd, pronounced upon the bridge *Tschinevad*, which divides heaven and earth, and beneath which, is the yawning abyss of hell. Prior to the resurrection, the soul, according to its desert, is either admitted into some abode of bliss, or cast into torment, where it is doomed to suffer more or less the pains of condemnation. The antagonistic empires of Ormuzd and Ahriman,† are engaged in perpetual warfare with

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\* Smith.

† These are two deities, of whom the former is of a beneficent, the latter, of a malevolent nature, and the same originally as the

each other, but after the lapse of twelve thousand years—the duration of the world, Ahriman will be vanquished; the empire of darkness, converted by Ormuzd into light, cease; the dead raised up; and he who has made all things, cause the earth and the sea to restore again the remains of the departed, when Ormuzd shall clothe them with flesh and blood, while they that live at the time of the resurrection, must die in order likewise to participate in its advantages. Before this momentous event takes place, three illustrious prophets shall appear, who will announce their presence by the performance of miracles. During this period of its existence, and till its final renewal, the earth will be afflicted with pestilence, tempests, war, famine, and various other baleful calamities. After the resurrection, every one will be apprised of the good or evil which he may have done, and the righteous and the wicked will be separated from each other. Those of the latter whose offences have not yet been expiated, will be again cast into hell during the term of three days and three nights, in the presence of an assembled

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devil or satan of the Jews and Christians. Both emanated from Zeruáné Akeréné, the Supreme Being, but the latter, in consequence of his envy towards the former, forfeited his primeval purity, and was condemned by Zeruáné Akeréné to the region of darkness, during the space of twelve thousand years. This period of punishment has its basis in the zodiac. As the sun passes through the twelve zodiacal signs in the course of a year, and then recommences its revolution where it started twelve months ago; so the duration of the world is calculated at a thousand years to a sign, and twelve such periods as the limit of the world, when a new cosmic order of things will be ushered into existence.

world, in order to be purified in the burning streams of liquid ore. After this they enjoy endless felicity in the society of the blessed, and the pernicious empire of Ahriman is fairly exterminated. Even this lying spirit will be under the necessity to avail himself of this fiery ordeal, and made to rejoice in its expurgating and cleansing efficacy. Nay, hell itself is purged of its mephitic impurities and washed clean in the flames of a universal *paliggenesia*.\* The earth is now the habitation of bliss; all nature glows in light; and the equitable and benignant laws of Ormuzd reign supremely throughout the illimitable universe. Finally, after the resurrection, mankind will recognize each other again; wants, cares, and passions will cease; and every thing in the paradisian and all-embracing empire of light, shall redound to the praises of the beneficent god Ormuzd.\*

In the religious system of the Hindoos, Brahma and Moisasur correspond to Ormuzd and Ahriman among the Persians. Like their distinguished analogues, they emanated from the Supreme Being, here called Parabrahma; and like them, the former retained by his goodness, while the latter forfeited by his wickedness, his original holiness. After order and harmony had reigned for a long time in the supernal world of spirits, Moisasur grew envious on account of Brahma's splendor, and, backed by a great number of inferior, kindred spirits, refused

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\* Regeneration, renovation, or restoration of all things to its primordial state.

† Pölitz.



obedience to the divine laws. In vain did Brahma endeavor to reclaim them: they began to wage a war of extermination against the good spirits, and Siva, known also as Chiven, was reluctantly compelled to eject them from heaven, and hurl them into Onderah, the abyss of darkness. Here fortunately they repented of their flagitious deeds, and, upon the intercession of the three superior deities, Brahma, Viehnou or Viehnoo, and Siva,\* Parabrahma resolved to provide them with the means of redemption from their wretched condition. Accordingly he doomed them to pass through fifteen different states of existence, of which the seven lowest are confined to various kinds of animal bodies, and are intended as chastisements and ameliorations. The eighth stage of metempsychosis is the probation in a human body. In this intermediate state, the fallen spirits have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the higher degrees of purification. Should they, however, despise the dictates of reason, they will again return to the lowest grade of being, and be obliged to begin anew the critical gyrations of existence. As to the seven superior degrees or stages of metempsychoses, they are designed for the complete expiation and restoration of the unhappy spirits.

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\* These Hindoo divinities are the personifications of the creative, the preservative, and the retributive attributes of Parabrahma. They constitute the Trimurti or Hindoo trinity. Metaphysically analyzed, Brahma is the unreflected or unevolved protogoneus state of divinity — the Father; Viehnou, the evolved or reflected state of divinity — the Son; and Siva, the reconversion of the Son or non-protogoneus divinity into the Father — the Holy Ghost.



To Moisasur too, the means of repentance were vouchsafed, but he obstinately persisted in his disloyalty; enlarged the limits of his satanic empire; and even strove to seduce the penitents from their renewed allegiance. The human soul having emanated from the pleroma or mundane soul, all those who shall assiduously exercise their reason by divine contemplation, may attain so great a degree of perfection that immediately after death, they shall be qualified to reënter or be reabsorbed into it; while those who do not make such progress in amelioration, pass again either into human or animal bodies; the retribution of good and bad deeds, is like the ocean billow,—no one can stay it! Finally, after the consummation of the present order of things, Siva will issue forth like a burning flame, and consume the world.\*

The dogmas and customs of the people of the Nile, in reference to a future state, deserve a concise, yet careful investigation. The dead of the Egyptians were subject to a twofold judicial investigation, before their present or future destiny could be decided. As soon as a person had expired, the members of his caste assembled around his corpse, and pronounced him worthy or unworthy of the honor of embalming and the solemn rites of sepulture, agreeably to the tenor of his past life. Prior to his admission into Amenthes,†—the Egyptian

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\* Pölitz.

† Amenthes signifies *ādēs*, *zophos*, or *erebos*—inferum sedes: occidens and darkness, or the infernal regions. The *fields of the blessed* of the Egyptians, were located in the Lybian desert, at the distance of a seven-days' journey west of Thebes.

Hades, the dead had to appear before the tribunal of the great god Osiris, the omnipotent judge and lord of the dead, who determined his fate in the spirit-world in conformity to the principles and character of his life. The last solemn judgment scene, as it was symbolically depicted by the ancient Egyptians, according to the "Descriptions and Antiquities of Egypt," by the French savans, is thus represented in a wall painting, in the temple of Isis at Thebes.

The dead is conducted by the goddess Isis to the supreme judge, Osiris. A balance appears in the tablature which is accurately adjusted by two hieroglyphical personages, who are no doubt intended to symbolize the scrupulous exactness with which Osiris awards his sentence upon the arraigned mortals. On this scale of equal justice, are weighed the good and bad qualities or actions of the deceased, and the result carefully noted down by Hermes or Thoth, — the Egyptian Mercury, — in the presence of Osiris. A priest and priestess intercede with Isis in behalf of the anxious, trembling souls: a beautiful trait of pagan humanity! A lotus flower, containing four mummy-like figures, composes a part of the scene, and is intended as the symbol of immortality. The god Harpocrates, who seemed to be charged with the execution of the Osirian sentence, assumes his place in the grand and solemn drama, with a flail in one hand and a pastoral crook in the other. Upon an altar before Harpocrates, is mounted a monster, composed of the body of a lion and the head of a boar, pierced by an arrow, and which some authors suppose to represent the soul of the dead in the pres-

ence of its dread and omniscient judge, while others, with more probability of truth, recognize in it the prototype of the Grecian Cerberus or dog of hell. In Amenthes the souls were purified and cleansed under the salutary instructions and guidance of the mild but inflexible Osiris: for the souls, however blameless and holy they might be, having once inhabited a material or mortal body, were more or less polluted, and needed expiation. Amenthes was therefore a place of repentance and amelioration, and all depended upon the docility and moral perfectibility of the soul while it existed under the parental tuition of Osiris, to render its future transmigratory cycle, after its discharge from the Amenthean abode, pleasant or disagreeable, and of a longer or shorter duration, and accordingly enter either into the body of a new-born child or that of some animal: transmigration to a greater or less extent, was the inexorable doom of every soul; ay, it was the *kúklos anágkēs* — the *inevitable cycle*. They however, who had led wicked lives, or been prone to flesh and sense in their pre-Amenthean state of existence, and who proved incorrigible at the expiration of their probatory period, had to pass through all the diversified grades of transmigration from the lowest form of sentient, organic life to that of man, before they could presume to indulge a hope of final salvation. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians were the first people who taught that the soul of man, upon the *decomposition* of the body, entered into the bodies of inferior animals; that having passed through all the animal forms of life, it at last assumed a human body; and that this metempsychosis: perhaps it

would be more proper to say *metensomatosis* — change of body, was accomplished in the space of three thousand years. This transmigratory process of human development, could be curtailed, though as we have seen already, not entirely prevented, by the embalming of the dead; for as long as the elementary parts of the body adhered together, the soul continued to remain in it. Hence the origin of the art of embalming, and the existence of mummies.\*

It is admitted upon the best authorities, that ancient Egypt was inhabited by priests and nomades, who, if they were not distinct races, were at least antipodal to each other in their manners and intellectual attainments: *these* were ignorant barbarians; *those*, men of varied and superior knowledge as well as of more refined habits. The latter taught the immortality of the soul under the name of *palingenisia*, — a return of it to the celestial spheres, or its reabsorption into the Supreme Being, without regard to the doctrine or the necessity of transmigration; while they communicated the same important truth to the former under the name and form of a metempsychosis, as these rude, illiterate hordes could have no idea of the existence of the soul without the body. It appears from Ossian that to have no funeral elegy

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\* Osiris was the first mummy, and was buried in the catacomb of Abydos in upper Egypt: priests, kings, and nobles were emulous to have sepulture there, and to repose in death near the great god Osiris. There were numerous catacombs in Egypt, some of which were of vast extent. The most celebrated were those of Thebes on the west side of the Nile towards the Lybian desert; of Memphis in lower Egypt; of Lycopolis, etc.

sung over his tomb, was regarded among the Celtic nations, as the greatest calamity which could befall a mortal, as in such a case his soul could not be admitted into the *airy halls of his fathers*. How sadly significant, therefore, are the words, "No bard sang over Erin's king." After death, they expected to follow employments similar to those which had amused or occupied them in this life—to fly with their friends on the wings of the clouds, in pursuit of airy deer, and to listen to the chants of the bards who should resound their praises. The Norse kingdom of the dead, called *hel*, from Hela, the goddess of Helheim or the infernal regions, and the impersonation of death and hell respectively, is situated in the higher latitudes of the polar regions. Its inmates may be seen and conversed with, but a deliverance from it before the time fixed by fate, is impossible; yet the living and the *dead* can keep up a mnemonic correspondence. When Baldur, the Apollo of the Scandinavians, died, his wife Nanna accompanied him to Hela, and while her celestial consort sent his ring *draupnir* to Odin as a keepsake, by the hands of Hermod, who had come from Asgard, the abode of the gods, to procure his liberation, she made him the bearer of a linen cassock and other splendid gifts to Frigga, the fair spouse of the stern god, and of a gold finger-ring to Fulla.\*

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\* It deserves to be remarked in this place, that the cold and cheerless regions of Hela, to which those who died a natural death descended, were not regarded as places of punishment, the sojourn in them being doomed merely to a negation of that rude kind of celestial bliss reserved exclusively for the *chosen heroes*. Eating and drinking appear to have been observed in the hall of Hela,



"It was the firm conviction of the ancient Germans," writes Gibbon, "that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world." "The things which a German valued most," says Murphy, in a note on Tacitus, "were his arms and his horse. These were added to the funeral pile, with the persuasion that the deceased would have the same delight in his new state of existence." To sit in the hall of Odin — the Elysium of the Teutonic nations, known in Gothic mythology under the euphonic appellation of Valhalla, and quaff the flowing goblets of mead and ale, was an idea ever present to the minds of the Gothic warriors; and to obtain this glorious distinction, inspired a contempt of danger, and the most daring and invincible courage.\* This theme, so pregnant in the most attractive fiction, whose object is the promotion of virtue with the hope of a just reward, and which is at once so *ad hominem* and ingenuous, is far from being exhausted, and therefore awaits a more prolix elucidation.

The doctrine of future rewards and punishments, according to the mythological creed of the Scandi-

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much in the same manner as in that of Odin. In the *Alvis-mal*, mention is made of a kind of corn which grows in the infernal regions, and it is stated that the drink which men call *ale*, is known there under the name of *mead*. Whatever may be the real condition of souls in a fiery hell, it is certain that the shades in the frosty halls of Hela — the gelid hell of the Norse people, are far from being in a condition which is utterly deplorable. Hermod, for instance, finds Baldur mounted upon an elevated seat, and both pass the evening very comfortably. — *Northern Antiquities*.

\* Beloe on Herodotus.



navian branch of the Teutonic race, who, under the respective appellations of Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, and Icelanders, inhabit that portion of Northern Europe, anciently known as Scandinavia, attained that elaborate expansion, and nice arrangement of parts, which almost gives it the precision and entitles it to the rank of a system; and being moreover, a fair type of the mythic faith of the Germanic division of this great family of nations, in respect to a future life and retribution, a notice of it in this place, cannot consistently be omitted. It expressly distinguishes two different abodes for the meritorious, and as many for the culpable. Of those, the first was the celebrated palace of Odin, named, as it has been stated already, Valhalla, where that august divinity received all such as died a violent death, from the beginning to the end of the world; that is, to the time of that universal desolation of nature, which was to be followed by a new creation, and what the Norse people called Ragnarök or the twilight of the gods. The second was recognized under the name of Gimli; that is, the palace covered with gold, which, after the renovation of all things, was to be the eternal home of the just, where they were to enjoy extatic and perennial delights. Gimli\* is in heaven, signifies heaven, nay, is heaven itself, and of all the habitations of the blessed, it deservedly ranks the highest, and inspires the most impassioned

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\* Grimm observes that in the Edda, Gimli is the dative case, a *gimli*, and he thinks that the nominative was *gimill*, and had the same signification as *himill*, *Himmel*, and heaven. — *Northern Antiquities*.

aspirations.\* In respect to the two places which were designed for the infliction and endurance of primitive justice, they distinguished the first by the name of Niflheim—the nebulous home, which was only to continue till the renovation of the world, when it was to be superseded by the second, designated by the term Naströna—the strand or shore of the dead, which was to endure for ever. In this Plutonian region, there is a vast and appalling structure with doors facing the cold, sombre north, and formed entirely of serpents, wattled together like wicker-work, with their heads and forked tongues turned towards the inside of the hall, and which continually vomit forth floods of venom, in which all those are obliged to wade who so far forget the obligations of the moral law, as to commit murder or to forswear themselves!

Valhalla—the hall of the chosen, like Niflheim, was only to exist till the conflagration of the world. Those only whose blood had been shed in battle, might presume to aspire to the enjoyments and distinctions, which Odin prepared for them in this stately mansion of ghostly daring and sensua-celestial delights. Such martial ideas of future bliss, show plainly enough what the Scandinavians most relished in this life. “The heroes,” says the Edda, “who

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\* Beside Valhalla and Gimli, there were two halls, which also afforded abodes of bliss to the righteous and well-minded. One was called Brimir, which was located in that region of heaven denominated Okolni: all who delighted in quaffing good drink, could find an abundant supply in it. The other was known as a gorgeous mansion of ruddy gold: it was named Sindri, and stood on the mountains of Nida.

are received into the palace of Odin, have every day the pleasure of arming themselves, of passing in review, of ranging themselves in order of battle, and of *cutting one another in pieces*; but as soon as the hour of repast approaches, they return on horseback all safe and sound to the hall of Odin, and fall to eating and drinking. Though the number of them cannot be counted, the flesh of the boar Sæhrimnir is sufficient for them all; every day it is served up at table, and every day it is renewed again to its original bulk: \* their beverage is ale and mead; one single goat, whose milk is excellent mead, furnishes enough of that liquor to intoxicate all the heroes. Odin alone drinks wine, the only fermented liquid to the use of which his good taste or his superior dignity invites his attention. A crowd of virgins wait upon the heroes at table, and fill their cups as fast as they empty them."

Every kind of death except such as was of a

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\* The ancients taught a *prima materia* in the graves, which survived corruption, and constituted the first germ of a new life. It was defined as an oily, tallow-like, and seedy matter, and believed to be the ovary of materia-generative existence. Oil or fat in man and animals, as a life-giving element, embraced in its genial efficacy the present and the future world. This psychophysiological hypothesis explains the reason why the shades in Valhalla feasted so freely on the fat of the boar, and why the first material life which appeared in a *stone*, was commemorated in the anointing of stones, pillars, etc., with oil or butter. Deucalion and Pyrrha formed men out of stones, and the German *Leute*, is derived from the Greek *lithos*, a stone, as is *laos*, the people, from *las*, which also signifies a stone. Again, *Spuck* is etymologically deduced from *Speck*, fat, and is the *prima materia* resisting *resolution* into ex-homo and absolute spiritual life. — G.

violent nature, incurred in war or single combat, was considered by these Norse warriors as ignominious, and unworthy of Teutonic fame; and hence, whoever dared to make his exit out of this world in the natural way, was inevitably doomed to the shadowy, dismal abodes of Niflheim. Niflheim — so dreary, so preternaturally terrific, was a region of almost illimitable dimensions, and consisted of no less than nine worlds, which were reserved for those that died of disease or old age. It was here where Hela, or death, exercised her despotic power with the most extreme rigor, and under circumstances the most appalling; her palace was Anguish; her table Famine; her waiters responded to the names of Slowness and Delay; Precipice was the threshold of her door; Care her bed; she herself was livid and ghastly pale; and her very looks inspired sentiments of lasting and profound horror.\*

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\* Northern Antiquities.

# BOOK II.

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## THE HEATHEN RELIGION

IN ITS

SYMBOLICAL DEVELOPMENT.





## PROLOGUE.

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To be intelligible, a few of the predominant phrases, used in this part of the work, need elucidation. Such are *symbol*, *allegory*, and *mythos*. A symbol is a sensible sign, involving a logical conclusion. Thus lightning and other meteoric phenomena are symbols, as are also the omens drawn from the significant flight and striking conduct of birds deemed sacred. The metaphorical representations in the sacred mysteries; as the fawn-skin in which the initiated were clothed; the cicade which they wore in their hair; the purple carpets which covered their apartments, were symbols of occult truths. Moreover, the language and signs of recognition in vogue among them, together with the formulas which they employed in the discharge of their mysterious functions, passed under the name of symbol, or a cognate term, such as *sunthema*. In its theological application, the symbol represents divine truth in the image or sign. Its distinctive character, as a medium of intelligence, is a definite and direct appeal to the human mind. There are various kinds of symbols, and they are either natural or artistic. Thus the sculptured or painted images of the gods, are plastic symbols; while animals furnish the zoonic, and plants the phytonic symbols. Phonetic symbols are based upon sound, and tones and language are their organs of expression; and the aphonetic are those which are destitute of the acoustic attributes. An allegory considered, not as a figure of speech, but as a token or emblematical representation of an act or event, implies a hidden thought, or an arbitrary sign or device.

The distinction between a symbolical and an allegorical representation, may be briefly thus defined: the latter simply imports a general conception, or conveys an idea which differs from itself, and of which it is not the exponent but merely the index; whereas the former is itself the embodied idea rendered perceptible to the senses. *There* a representation, properly speaking, exists: an *icon*, or image, is given, but the idea contained in it or the truth which it is designed to convey, instead of being expressed is only implied, and must, therefore, be determined by a knowledge of the laws or the nature of hieroglyphics. *Here* this idea has descended into the corporeal world, and we perceive it immediately and at once in the idol or form which it assumes. In one word, in the symbol there is an instantaneous revelation; in the allegory, a circumlocution in the solution of its significance. Finally, the allegory comprises the mythos, which the symbol does not. The Greek mythos, anglicized into myth, is synonymous with the German *Gemüth*, and signifies, etymologically, the undisclosed thoughts of the soul. It is divided into two parts, and either includes ancient events, in which case it is called *Saga*, or narration; or, ancient faith and doctrine, when it is denominated tradition.

The characteristic trait of the myth is to convert reflections into history, or actual occurrences. As in the *epos*, so in the myth, the historical element predominates. Facts often constitute the basis of the myth, and with these religious ideas are interwoven, or in other words, divine truth like the fire of Prometheus, is brought down from heaven into the tangible sphere of human events. Considered practically, it is applicable to statements or accounts generally, and may be true or false like any other communication. In process of time, a distinction was made between *logos* — a saying or report, and mythos, when the former imparted a true, and the latter a fabulous, narration. Lastly, a myth may be of a mixed nature, or partly true and partly fictitious. In such a case, it was said to be a myth in which truth was mirrored forth, or that there was logos in mythos; that is, truth in fiction.

## DIVISION I.

### THE ASTRONOMICAL GODS, OR PHYSICO-ASTRONOMICAL THEOLOGY.\*

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#### SECTION I.

##### THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE EGYPTIAN RELIGION.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### OSIRIS AND ISIS, TYPHON AND NEPHTHYS.

BEFORE I proceed to remove the mystic veil of ages from the gods and the religion of antiquity, it is deemed expedient briefly to show that the very root and essence of the theology of the ancients,

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\* To classify the gods of antiquity with any degree of rigid precision, I hold to be impracticable; for, though a broad line of distinction is drawn around some of them, others have many functions and attributes in common, while, at the same time, they materially differ in other respects. Whoever, therefore, may feel so disposed, can dispense with the systematic distinctions which the author has attempted to establish, and pursue his mytho-religious contemplations by simply regarding the gods in the light of their national or individual peculiarities.

as far as myth or history has made us acquainted with their creeds and their worship, is a thoroughly digested system of emanation and evolution : *God manifest in the flesh* ; and not merely in the abstract ; as, wisdom, goodness, power, justice, but also in the concrete ; as, King, Saviour, Creator, destroyer, etc. A beautiful idea, full of truth and significance ! It has already flashed across the path of our vision, and will still continue to be reflected in our future investigations, and to shine with a sufficiently strong light to establish it as a primary feature in mythological faith. What, it may be asked, is good or great, fair or interesting on earth or in heaven, that is not of God ? What is the vast, multitudinous universe, but the *fulness of Him that filleth all in all* ? A universality of divine life and power in creation, is clearly taught by the inspired Apostle, in the nervous and lofty sentence, "There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and *through all*, and *in you all*." The belief or doctrine that all is of God and therefore is divine, or that preternatural energies everywhere manifest themselves in man and world-controlling influences, was the first article of faith among men ; the alpha and the omega of their religious convictions, as we have shown on former occasions. The obliteration of this truth from the soul, a doubt of it, or even only an unconscious, wavering conviction of its reality, is a forfeiture of innocence ; is sin ; is *the fall* of man and of angels !

As to the Typhons, the Ahrimans, the Moisasurs, etc., the personifications of physical and moral evil, what are they, considered in the latter capacity, but the symbolized instrumentalities of the development

of true life, the homely handmaids of the only feasible happiness among finite spirits? and, in the former, but good often misunderstood, or the unpleasant and frequently painful manifestations of nature, which are the primary and indispensable conditions of the production of much, if not all, that is useful or admirable in cosmic organization? They may prove hurtful now, eventually they will bless. Man, in his ignorance, may deprecate, in his wisdom he cannot but admire and appreciate them. The poet-author of the "Essay on Man," with the exception, perhaps, of his idea of the *deviation of nature*, as philosophically as evangelically thus interprets the nature and end of evil: —

"What makes all physical or moral ill?  
There deviates nature, and here wanders will.  
God sends not ill, if rightly understood,  
Or partial ill is universal good,  
Or change admits, or nature lets it fall,  
Short, and but rare, till man improv'd it all."

Devils, we have seen, will not always be devils; and present evil, wisely estimated and prudently endured, is but the embryo of future good. Did not light spring up in primeval darkness? and the fair-proportioned, illimitable universe once lay wrapt in the swaddlingclothes of grim, impassive chaos? Even the petition, so full of hope and promise, "Deliver us from evil," is, at least to some extent, a standing guaranty of this truth. Though Osiris the good should be oppressed, nay, even deprived of life, yet will he rise triumphantly over all the Typhonic and Plutonic powers. Nevertheless, without their existence it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to recognize him as the good god.

Osiris and Isis are the two principal deities, or deified personifications of nature, especially in its astronomical attributes, among the ancient Egyptians. Genealogy traces their descent to Chronos and Rhea, or according to some mythologists, to Jupiter and Rhea. Their social relation was sanctified and strengthened by the connubial tie, but owing to the adverse periodical changes inherent in their natures and dynasty, — the unpropitious phases which nature assumes in the course of its annual revolution, both their domestic felicity and regal prosperity were often painfully interrupted, and the mythic account of their lives and reign includes passages of unparalleled trials and sufferings.

Osiris symbolized the sun and the Nile, Isis the moon and Egypt; and both, the solar year. The god was worshipped under the form of an ox or *apis*: *apis* strictly speaking, under that of *taurus*, properly so called, one of the twelve signs of the zodiac; and the goddess, under that of a cow. According to her Egyptian votaries, Isis was the first of the deities who called the attention of the human race to the cultivation of wheat, barley, and other cereal grains; while her celestial consort introduced the plough, the hoe, the spade, and other agricultural implements to the notice of mortals. He enjoyed, also, the enviable reputation of having been the first god who taught man how to break the ox to the plough; and to his prudent foresight and beneficent care the institution of civil laws and religious worship, among the people of the Nile, owed its origin. After he had accomplished a salutary reform at home, Osiris resolved to go forth and spread the blessings of civili-



zation in other parts of the earth. During his absence, the regency of his kingdom was confided to the hands of the beloved Isis. He travelled into different countries, and by means of music and moral suasion alone, everywhere succeeded to instil into the minds of mankind the principles of knowledge; to instruct them in the faith and service of the gods; and to disseminate among them the fruits of those useful agrarian inventions and municipal improvements, so essential to the social prosperity of nations.

On his return, Osiris found the minds of his subjects agitated: his wicked brother Typhon, grown presumptuous in consequence of his protracted absence, and thinking it to be a favorable opportunity to seize the reins of government, now grown slack in the feeble grasp of the goddess queen, he boldly scattered the baleful seeds of sedition among the people; but the vigilant Isis manifested a courage and provident assiduity, at this critical juncture of the commonwealth, which for the present disconcerted all his wily plans, and completely baffled his perfidious attempts to breed disaffection among her subjects, and gradually prepare them for a general revolt. Typhon, the hateful author of all the malignant concatenation of causes and influences in nature, unabashed by his recent defeat, and still resolved upon the execution of his contemplated treachery, now entered into a league with seventy-two *Devs*, all members of his own depraved and mischievous family, and besides, formed a treaty of alliance with her sable majesty of Ethiopia, queen Aso. Thus reinforced, the chief of the conspirators determined no

longer to wage an inglorious or unprofitable war against an enemy whom he affected to despise, or sought to subdue by the infliction of a wound, which should be deep and painful in proportion as it was unexpected, and therefore unavoidable, but to contend for the prize of life and of empire with Osiris himself. To accomplish his atrocious ends with more facility, he assumed the mask of friendship, and probably still further hiding his new scheme of villany under the specious semblance of remorse, he invited his unsuspecting victim to a feast, which he pretended, was especially designed to do him honor. Meanwhile, the fratricidal wretch had had a superb ark, or chest, prepared, which, while the unsuspecting guests were merrily enjoying the festive entertainment, was suddenly set down before them, and promised as a present to him whose body should exactly correspond to its dimensions: the chest had been made after the measure of Osiris's body clandestinely obtained! All having tried the novel experiment without success, it remained for Osiris to lie down in it, which he had no sooner done, than Typhon and his infamous colleagues rushed to the spot, closed the lid, and the more effectually to secure it, circumfused it with lead. After this daring and flagitious achievement, they threw it into the Nile, whence it was conveyed into the sea, through the Tanitic mouth of that river. Thus died the saviour Osiris, by the brutal hands of his unfeeling brother, on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, the thirteenth day of November, and in the twenty-eighth year of his *age* or *reign*! No sooner had this horrible deed been perpetrated, than Pan and the Satyrs ran through Egypt in all

directions, and with the most heart-rending cries and lamentations, proclaimed the sudden and untimely fate of the great god.

At Chemmis, Isis received the doleful tidings. The most impassioned wailings attested the intensity of her sorrow and the greatness of her loss. Frantically she beats her anguished breast; cuts off a lock of her hair, and deposits it in the place as a memorial of the tragic event; puts on mourning apparel; and sets out to seek the body of her murdered husband. Everywhere she makes anxious inquiries, and at last children inform her of the place where she might presume to find the precious remains of the lost one.

An incident which occurred during the lifetime of Osiris, and which might have created considerable disturbance in families composed of mere mortals, and governed by purely human principles, proved highly advantageous to the bereft and disconsolate Isis. Typhon had a sister known under the appellation of Nephthys, who was also his wife. It happened, on a certain occasion, that Osiris, who lived under the same roof with his Typhonian kindred, mistook Nephthys for his lawful spouse, and the consequence was the birth of a son, named Anubis, wise and good like his illustrious sire, but of the nature and with the head of a dog. This singular creature Isis makes her confident ally, and both now renew the tedious search after the dead body with redoubled zeal. For a long time their endeavors prove fruitless; for scarcely had the encased god been driven among the bulrushes near Byblus, on the Phœnician coast, when a latent power of divinity, still residing

among his remains, so miraculously affected an individual of the *erica*-family of plants, that from a small shrub, it suddenly shot up into a lofty and majestic tree, whose ample trunk completely enclosed, and for some time entirely hid from view, the floating tomb of the defunct deity. At last Malcandros, king of Phœnicia, happening to take a walk on the mysterious strand, and struck with the size and beauty of the erica, had it cut down and wrought into a pillar for his palace. Sacred birds and Anubis announce this fact to Isis. Oppressed with grief, and in the habit, and with the demeanor of a servant-maid, she sat down at a well before the walls of Byblos, where she was discovered by the queen's maids of honor. While plaiting her hair, she indulged in a brief conversation with these fair damsels. No sooner had the latter returned to their royal mistress, than the whole palace was filled with the most delicious odors. They now related their interview with the interesting stranger, and observe that in the adornment of her hair, she had made use of a very fragrant and precious ointment. The queen immediately sent for her, and happening to have an infant son, she hesitated not to appoint Isis to be his nurse. Instead of giving the child the breast as she was expected to do, she presumed to discharge her assumed maternal duty, by simply introducing her forefinger into his mouth. In the night, when all were buried in profound sleep, she laid the scion of royalty into the fire, in whose burning flames she sought to purify him from the dross and pollution of his material nature. The little ward grew with superhuman rapidity, and it was not long before the suspi-

cion of the vigilant mother was aroused. She resolved closely to watch the ambiguous conduct of the nurse during the night; she did so; saw the fiery purgation; and uttered a piercing cry. Thus detected, Isis reveals her divinity in thunder and lightning, and a sheet of refulgent light fills the stately mansion. The goddess now approaches the erica-pillar, and with one tremendous stroke from her hand, shivers it in pieces. The wood she generously gives to the king, and it is known as the *wood of grace*. Around the long lost and now found remains of her husband, the bereft and wretched Isis indulges her grief to such a degree, that the oldest son of the king died from the mingled emotions of pity and fright! Hence in all the countries bordering upon the shores of the Nile, might be heard reëchoing the funeral dirge of Maneros. The corpse of the deceased Osiris is brought back in triumph, and the piety and hope of the Egyptians are once more reconciled to the decrees of fate.

The healing influence of time gradually assuaged the violence of Isis's sorrow; and fierce revenge, or at least a keen sense of retributive justice, now assumed the place of depressing woe. Horus, or Orus, the son of an injured mother and a murdered father, is the only remaining member of this august family, who is qualified to assert its rights and avenge its wrongs. During the calamitous events above related, this promising youth resided in the city of Buto, where he prosecuted his arduous and interesting studies under the superintendence of a learned and faithful female friend. Towards this place, Isis directs her tottering steps, and, bearing with her the



body of her adored spouse, cautiously hides it in a lonely spot in the thickets of the forest. Alas! fortune is known only by its instability. Typhon—cruel hunter! announces a chase, and this leads to the discovery of the secreted treasure. The lid is removed, and this terrible Nimrod of the Nile, falling upon the inanimate mass with the insatiate fury of a tiger, cuts it up into fourteen pieces. The news of this new outrage soon reached the ears of Isis,—the cup of whose affliction could only be drained when it overflowed; preparing for the worst, yet hoping for the best, she again sets out to recover at all hazards, and at every sacrifice, the dismembered corpse of the ill-fated god. To facilitate her progress, and insure success to her enterprise, she takes the precaution to embark in a papyrus-boat, and steering through all the seven mouths of the Nile, has the good luck to find thirteen pieces of the mangled remains, but the fourteenth, the *virilites*, eludes the most vigilant search. Unfortunately, the blue waters of the Nile had borne it into the sea, and what is still worse, certain fishes—ever since deemed accursed—had the audacity or the misfortune to devour it!

Instead, however, of yielding to despair, she evinces a fortitude superior to the frailties of her sex, and resolves to profit by her partial good fortune, without repining at a loss which her skill might, in some measure, repair. Accordingly she replaced the recovered parts with the accuracy of a practical anatomist, and the missing portion she supplied by a fac-simile made of the wood of the sycamore. To commemorate this astounding feat,



the plastic goddess founded the *phallus-mystery*; and the body of Osiris thus restored, was conveyed to Philä,\* where it was honored with sepulchral rites, and since that time, Philä has been the grand mortuary of Egypt. *There* gorgeous temples arose, and *thither* devout pilgrimages were made, in glorification of the entombed deity.

The decisive moment for retribution had now arrived, and the powerful Horus, born of Isis at a period in life when his father was still in the full vigor of manhood, stood ready to inflict condign punishment upon the remorseless slayer of his father-god. Osiris appears to him from Amenthes; tests his capacity for the execution of so arduous a task; and, convinced of his ability, bids him vindicate his fame, and maintain the integrity of the ancient laws. Thus summoned to guide the helm of State, and to defend the rights of his people, and the hopes of his house, the gallant youth collects a valiant host of loyal combatants from all the cantons of Egypt, and boldly prepares to meet the rebel foe. Meanwhile the usurper was not idle, but rallying his native troops under his standard, and hastily collecting his foreign auxiliaries, he placed himself at the head of his formidable forces, determined to wrest by force what he could not obtain by intrigue or deceit. A battle ensues, and justice triumphs over wrong. Typhon, the vile instigator of so much disorder,

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\* Philä, also written Philæ, is an ancient town in ruins, situated in an island of the Nile bearing the same name, where this river enters Egypt. Philä is celebrated for its splendid architectural remains, hieroglyphical symbols, and lapidary inscriptions.

crime, and misery, falls alive into the hands of the victor; but strange as it may seem, Isis releases the savage captive! This act of unseasonable clemency so enrages Horus, that, in the violence of his passion, he snatches the glittering diadem from the head of his mother. Hermes, ever fertile in resources, substitutes the hide of a cow with the horns of an ox in the place of it, and this bovisal decoration has ever since been the distinguishing symbol of the goddess.

The consequences of the imprudent liberation of Typhon soon became apparent, and he repaid the magnanimity of Isis according to the most approved principles of satanism. Assuming the contemptible office of a traducer, he convoked an assembly of homogeneous spirits; and with an effrontery unequalled in myth or history, contested the legitimacy of Horus. The attempt, however, proved futile, and branded as a liar, he and his confederates in iniquity were banished into the neighboring deserts. As for Horus, he formally ascended the throne of his ancestors, and was the last among a long and illustrious line of gods who reigned over Egypt. Human rulers now succeeded;\* yet Isis gave birth to a posthumous child, named Harpocrates, the mysterious offspring of the mangled remains of Osiris: he was the son of pain and affliction, and had the misfortune to be lame and of a feeble constitution.

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\* According to Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, king Menes reigned in Egypt immediately after the gods; and in his time, we are told by the former historian, the whole area of Egypt, except the province of Thebes, was a vast, dreary expanse of marsh.

## PARAGRAPH I.

*The Interpretation of the Myth, or the Egyptian Year.*

The ancient Egyptian calendar divides the solar year into the civil and the natural, or agrarian year. The former was calculated with mathematical accuracy, and was composed of twelve months, each containing thirty days, with the addition of five intercalary days. The appearance of Sirius at the summer solstice, led to a different beginning of the year, and gave rise to a more comprehensive period of time—the Sothis-period. It constituted the basis of sacerdotal astronomy, and determined the date of the sacred year.

The allegorical myth which we have just had occasion to consider, is founded upon the climate of Egypt, and the agrarian pursuits of its inhabitants. The sequel will show that it is intimately connected with the annual revolution of time, and the different seasons to which it gives rise. The Egyptian year involves a twofold seed and harvest-time. The first embraces the vernal period of the year, and extends from February, when the grain is sown, to July, when it attains maturity; the second includes the autumnal division, in which an interval of time, reaching from the last of September to the latter part of November, marks the season of semination, which is succeeded in the following March by the golden harvest. Considered now as the Nile, then as the sun, Osiris, like Egypt's cereal grain, must die and revive twice a year; and twice a year Isis is

doomed to bewail his exit, or invited to rejoice at his return. The first death happens in the spring, from March till July, which is the season of glowing heat in Egypt; herbs and grasses often wither and die; the seeds of hope and of a new harvest frequently lie dormant in the earth for a long time, or the nascent seedlings pine under the ungenial influence of an arid atmosphere. Scorching winds blowing from the Lybian desert, essentially contribute to inflame and rarefy the air. Serpents and venomous insects multiply to an alarming extent, and their fury and destructiveness increase with their numbers. Fatal diseases rage under the most malignant types, and the intensely heated sky assumes a frightful, lurid-red hue,—the favorite color of Typhon. It is the unpropitious period of the year, when the malevolent god reigns paramount. Isis, the parched land of Egypt, languishes; she utters lamentations of distress; and pitiable cries are sent to heaven for the ineffable blessings of water.\* It is all in vain: the

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\* “The situation of Egypt upon the globe makes it always warm; and at certain seasons the heat is intolerable. From March till November, the mercury in Fahrenheit’s thermometer rises in the shade to eighty-six or eighty-eight degrees. This being the case in the Delta, the heat is more intense in Upper Egypt, where the earth has little, and in some parts no vegetable clothing, but abounds in arid and burning rocks. In this situation, the thermometer never indicates a lower temperature than fifty degrees, and seldom less than fifty-two, even in the coldest season of the year. This excessive heat is partly occasioned by the distance of Egypt from the ocean, and by the moderate height of its hills; for in places nearer the line, where the mountains are high, the cool air, descending from the high regions, refreshes the country, and moderates the climate. And we may add, that the

evil days must first pass away; Osiris has not yet waked up; he sleeps a long and profound sleep among the sable Ethiopians, to whose country he has been banished, and where, besides, he is retained as a captive behind the rock-bound gate of the city of Elephantine, known in modern history as Ell-Sag. In this miserable plight, Osiris denotes the dwindled state of the Nile, now almost dried up, or wasted away to a feeble, sluggish rivulet. Alas! Egypt's great river can no longer supply the irrigating waters to the gaping canals: the quickening fluid tarries beyond the cataracts, where the tropical rains alone can swell and revive the stagnant and expiring stream. Isis, the grief-worn spouse, is the sister-earth wedded to Nile-Osiris, or Osiris in his vernal death, and pining under a consuming drought. Typhon appears in this tragic scene of nature as the envious, wicked brother; the cruel tyrant who, in the fierceness of his wrath, impels his fire-breathing, furiously bellowing *steers* — the burning winds, through the desert.\* He has entered into a conspir-

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air is never cooled by copious rains; for if we except occasional showers on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which happen in the months of December, January, and February, scarcely a drop of rain falls through all the extent of Egypt. A slight shower in any other part of that vast country is a rare occurrence, and seldom seen by the most aged and observing." — The American Edition of the New Edinburgh Encyclopædia.

\* The Etesian winds must not be confounded with the Lybian winds noticed in the text. They are north-easterly winds, which annually commence to blow about eight days before Sirius, or the dog-star, is visible above the horizon, and therefore the Greeks called them *prodromi*, or forerunners. They generally continue



acy with Aso, the black queen of torrid Ethiopia; that is, Ethiopia coöperates climatically with Typhon, or is Typhonic, inasmuch as in withholding its rains till the destined period, it prolongs the withering drought of Egypt, and aggravates the multiplied misery of its sweltering inhabitants. This misery and that drought last seventy-two days, and these are metaphorically designated the Devs, deusii, or evil genii, with whom Typhon has associated his malversations and his fortunes. No sooner have

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during a period of forty days, and are said to be of a mild and genial nature.\*

The Lybian, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, the Sahara-Lybian winds, are thus described in "The American Edition of the New Edinburgh Encyclopædia:" "The comforts of Egypt are diminished, by being subject, in some degree, to that suffocating wind of the deserts, which spreads terror and desolation. It is called the *samiel*, the *simoon*, and the *chamsin*. It is announced by a lowering, troubled sky, and sometimes by a hissing noise. Its heat may be compared to that of a newly opened oven, and its effects are always distressing, and sometimes insupportable. It hardens the skin, and destroys the vegetable growth. It affects the lungs by its pernicious qualities, produces convulsions, and sometimes death. It is felt in Africa, India, Syria, and Arabia; and it reaches Italy in a more modified condition, where it is called the *sirocco*, and is guarded against with anxiety and care."

Upon the authority of Pliny and others, I have applied the epithet *north-easterly* to the Etesian winds, but Doctor Parish—apparently upon the authority of Bruce—describes them as the winds which blow all summer from the *north-west*! A distinguished author calls them *northern breezes*, common in spring and autumn, and his designation seems to be that which is nearest the truth.

\* Beloe on Herodotus.



these trying days terminated than Osiris, the Nile, awakes from his deathlike lethargy.

In short, Typhon is the personification of every evil, and as far as this prolific myth is concerned, especially of physical evil; the *Smy*, or the withering and consuming fire-demon, as Plutarch has pertinently styled him. He is the unprincipled paramour of the dissolute Nephthys: the inimical Lybian desert, and the cragged, tempestuous sea-strand. These form the main provinces of his native empire. On the contrary, happy Egypt, or rather the valley of the Nile, luxuriant in verdant crops, and abounding in multiplied resources of wealth and social prosperity, is the fair domain of the good mother Isis.

Thus defined, Egypt is the *Chemia*; that is, the black country, so denominated on account of its rich black soil, at once moist and warm, and fertile to an almost incredible degree.

Gibbon, writing of the agricultural resources of the Eastern empire, in the reign of the emperor Justinian, thus refers to Egypt: "Abraham had been relieved by the well-known plenty of Egypt; the same country, a small and populous tract, was still capable of exporting, each year, two hundred and sixty thousand quarters of wheat for the use of Constantinople."

Soon after the sun has entered the sign of the Scorpion, on the thirteenth of November, the autumnal mourning of the Egyptians begins; for Osiris dies a second time by the hands of his blood-thirsty brother: it is still seed-time in a part of the country, and as the seed-grain in the earth dies — in its reproductive development — so Osiris, contem-

plated as the retroceding sun, wanes in his power, or hyperbolically speaking, dies.\* Sorrow and wailing spread gloom and dismay through the land; and Isis may again be seen sallying forth in pursuit of her dead and missing spouse. The days are rapidly decreasing; night is in the ascendant; the Delta, at least, is still more or less in a state of submersion; and that invaluable gift of heaven, water, but recently hailed as the greatest blessing, begins already to be deprecated as an evil: the hope of many is still buried under the turbid floods of the Nile.†

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\* Eberhard in his work, *Der Geist des Urchristenthums*, thus writes of Osiris: "In the sacred, symbolical language of the Egyptians, Osiris was the sun, the solar year, and the solar cycle. The end of the old, and the commencement of the new year, was announced in all the temples of Egypt; and therefore it was said that in every one of them was contained the grave of Osiris: the termination of the solar year. The conclusion of the old, and the beginning of the new division of annual, solar time, was ascertained through a *year-gnomon*, composing the statue of Memnon, or Amenophis, with the article prefixed, *Phamenophis*.<sup>1</sup> Upon the mouth of this image fell, through a small aperture, a ray of the sun at the precise moment of time when the new year began. From the mouth of Memnon, therefore, the birth of the rising year was disclosed; and hence it was figuratively asserted that the statue of the god spoke, or made an oral declaration of the great astronomical fact."

† The Egyptians ordinarily sowed their fields only after they had been prepared for the seed by the natural or artificial inundation of the Nile. Speaking of those Egyptians who inhabited that part of the valley of the Nile which is situated between Memphis and the Mediterranean Sea, Herodotus observes, "As

<sup>1</sup> This statue, according to Tooke, made of black marble, and set up in the temple of Serapis at Thebes, performed also the function of a diurnal gnomon, and indicated the rising and the setting sun. — G.

The myth of this physico-theological system attains considerable diversity of significance at this

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soon as the river has spread itself over their lands and returned to its bed, each man scatters the seed over his ground, and waits patiently for the harvest, without any other care than that of turning some *swine* into his fields to tread down the grain," etc. On this passage Beloe thus remarks: "Plutarch, Eudoxus, and Pliny relate the same fact,—about the swine treading down the grain. Valckenaer does not hesitate to consider it a fable invented by Herodotus; and the sagacious Wesseling seems to be of the same opinion, though he has not rejected the expression. Gale, not thinking swine adapted to tread down the grain, has substituted oxen, because in Hesychius and Phavorinus the word *us* seems to signify an ox. My own opinion on this matter is, that Herodotus is mistaken only with regard to the time when they were admitted into the fields. It was probably before the corn was sown, that they might eat the roots of the aquatic plants, which might prove an injury to the grain," etc. In his "Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Aegypten, Nubien, nach Arabien," Burkhard says of the people of Berbera in Africa, "They are partly nomades and partly tillers of the soil. After the inundation, the latter sow all the land which has been overflowed, with *Durra* and some barley. A little before they sow, they dig up the earth with *spades*: the plough is not known among them." The grain chiefly cultivated in Egypt, was a species of spelt or amel-corn, commonly known as the seven-eared wheat. To enable the stalk of this grain to support so great a weight, the Creator has formed it with a compact pith, thus distinguishing it from the weak, hollow stem of the rest of the *triticum family*, and rendering it sufficiently firm and strong to accomplish the end for which it is designed. Herodotus will throw additional light upon the estimation in which spelt was held among the Egyptians. "Wheat and barley," he writes, "are common articles of food in other countries, but they are in Egypt thought mean and disgraceful; the diet here consists principally of spelt, a kind of corn which some call *zea*."

stage of its development, and it deserves to be further but briefly unfolded. Typhon, as the malignant god, is now the hated Nile; and as the obscurer of the sun, he is winter. Osiris — the beneficent principle of generation, is languishing; ay, slain by Nile — Typhon. Again, Osiris the recovered, or considered as the sun during the early stages after its return from the southern hemisphere at the winter-solstice, is the limping, powerless Harpocrates: the *little sun*. Isis, as the moon, is debilitated; for she lacks the wonted profusion of the solar rays. But the dismal scene suddenly shifts to one which is all bright and joyous, and on the eleventh of the month Tybi — the sixth of January, is a jubilee-festival throughout Egypt. The lamps are lighted and suspended before the houses of the inhabitants, and the whole country is illuminated with the fires of a new-born hope.\* Osiris is found: the sun gains strength, or is ascending in its orbit; and Sol-Osiris has once more passed triumphantly through the dark, depressing hours of trial. The nascent, cereal plants now also appear, — clothed in the green robe of promise, above the surface of the soil: it is their resurrection from a

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\* "In Egypt," says M. Mallet, "there is no rejoicing, no festival of any consideration at all, unaccompanied with illumination." — Herodotus states that at the festal sacrifice at Sais, celebrated during the night, in honor of *Minerva*, the oil of the lamps used on the occasion, was mixed with salt. Light was universally deemed sacred among the ancients, and in salt, it was generally believed, resided a peculiar sanctity. Are not, therefore, the words of the Saviour, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world," a singular coincidence between revelation and reason?

slimy grave. Everywhere new life prevails: all nature is rejuvenated — born again.\*

## PARAGRAPH II.

### *The Symbology of the Myth.*

Sculpture, metallurgy: for example, the golden calf of Aaron, painting, relievos, inscriptions, sacred history, architectural designs, religious observances, sacred games, sacred mysteries, etc., constitute the prolific source of hieroglyphical language, and symbolical significance. An elucidation of some of the symbols which relate to the details of the preceding disquisition on this subject, and which, according to the great work of the French savans, *Description de L' Egypte*, are found in the temple-sculpture of Philä and Carnac, will here be attempted.

Among the rich and varied drapery of symbolical devices, the following pictorial personages play an important part. The first is a small figure, dressed in the Egyptian habit, with the usual head gear, and up-raised hands, seemingly indicative of supplication. It is probably meant for a priest, in whose person the Egyptian people are represented: he petitions Heaven for the annual blessing; that is, for a high flood of the

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\* After Christianity had been introduced into Egypt, the *fathers of the church* deemed it advisable, in order to wean the heathens from a superstitious observance, instead of the Egyptian festival, celebrated on the sixth of January, in honor of the advent of the savior Osiris, to set apart that day in commemoration of the birth of Christ. Candlemas, in the Christian church, has its origin in the Egyptian *feast of lamps*, — the birth festival of Osiris.



Nile, on the inundations of which depend the fertility of Egypt, and the prosperity of its inhabitants. Before him stands Hermes, whose form is human, excepting the head, which is that of an ibis. In his hand is contained a long, serrated rod, which declines at the top, and shoots out into three connected lines. To one of the serratures of this rod, Hermes points significantly, while he intently eyes Osiris, who is seated in the centre of a symbolical group, and who, though represented in human form, is recognized as the god by the key of the Nile — the hilted-cross, and one of the distinctive badges of his divinity. The deity holds an obtuse cone under the rod, or Nilometer, evidently to balance it, and thus enable Hermes to determine the increment of the Nile. Behind Osiris, stands Isis, entreatingly raising her hands towards heaven, and seconding the intercession of the priest in behalf of Egypt. Hermes, the ibis-headed god, is the sacred scribe of Osiris, and the celestial geometrician, who, pointing to the Nilometer, and eying the god of nature, inquires the determining point of the Nilic flood. A singular relief, probably denoting the subsiding of the Nile, and the happy consequences of its inundation, represents a male figure of large dimensions, reclining upon a bed. A lion skin covers his body, and his head is supported upon the right arm, while a fantastic bird, with the body of a vulture peculiar to Ethiopia, and the head of a youth, decorated with a symbolical cap, hovers over him. His *membrum virile*, indicative of a beneficent regeneration of nature, protrudes to a prodigious size. At the head and foot of the bed, stand two females who are supposed to denote the celestial



and the terrestrial Isis, the one bearing a globe in her hand, and ox-horns upon her head, and the other holding a greatly elongated rectangle, upon which is placed a vase. They evidently await the conclusion of the scene before them. Behind the goddess at the foot of the bed, appear two rows of personages, one above the other. The two first figures in the first row, have male-bodies and frog-heads; those in the centre, also two in number, have the bodies of females, decked with aquatic serpents: both pairs have their sandals ornamented with jackal-heads. The two last personages in the row, seem to be the Egyptian god Thoth, with the head of an ibis, and Harpocrates, readily known by his compressed legs.\* This crippled divinity holds a wand in his hands, upon which a lotus leaf is represented. Behind the Isis last mentioned, stands a falcon-headed man, who, armed with a club, is in the act of slaying a fettered little fellow, having the head of a hare, and whose long ears he has firmly grasped with his left hand. To the rear of this hare-man killer, is still another personage, — a priest, who brings an offering of two vases, from the bases of which are suspended holy ribands, etc.

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\* Thoth is only another name for Hermes. Anubis is also an appellation to which the same god responds. With the name of Thoth or Hermes especially, the Egyptians associated the ideas of all that is profound and admirable in science or literature, and to this divinity, regarded and adored as the fountain-head of discursive knowledge, they therefore traced the origin of all the intellectual attainments and moral preminence of mankind.

In the opinion of the French savans, this symbolical tableau relates to Egypt and the Nile. The reclining figure is Osiris, symbolizing the Nile, which, metaphorically speaking, is on the point of awakening from its lethargy; and the lion-skin with which the god is covered, denotes the entrance of the sun into Leo, now Cancer; the period of the year when the waters of that river attain their greatest height. The grotesque bird is emblematical of the fruitfulness and plenty which the flood of the Nile, descending from Ethiopia, pours into the lap of Egypt. Its juvenile head imports renovated nature. The little hare-man, about to be slain for a sacrifice, announces to us that the decisive time has arrived when the hare must forsake the flat, low country, and take refuge on the hills and in the deserts. This quadruped was also a symbol of fecundity among the ancients, and therefore a fit emblem of the fertility of Egypt, consequent upon the felicitous inundation of the Nile. The serpent-decked and frog-headed personages, with the jackal-headed sandals, are declarative of the fact that on the arrival of the Nilic flood, frogs and serpents are swept away; and that they can only find a secure asylum in the desert—the usual haunt of the jackal. As has already been stated, the country of Egypt, so vitally interested in the consequences of the inundation, is represented in the person of the entreating Isis. The presentation of the vases, it is supposed, signifies a drink-offering from the incipient flood; and according to Savigny's "*Histoire Naturelle et Mythologie d' Ibis*," the ibis-head of Hermes is characteristic of the overflowing

of the Nile.\* The same is true of the wreaths and leaves of the lotus which occur in this class of artistic symbols.† At last Osiris awakes: the Nile bursts

\* The Egyptian ibis, properly so called, and known in natural history as the *Ardea ibis*, belongs to the order of birds distinguished in natural history as the *grallæ*, or waders. Its color is entirely black; its beak remarkably crooked; its neck long and flexible; while its legs are both long and sinewy: its general appearance is a good deal like that of the stork, and in size it is equal to the hen-raven. By destroying the serpents, frogs, toads, etc., which bred in the miry ground and slimy pools after the ebbing of the Nile, this bird deserved and received the esteem and veneration of the ancient Egyptians; and so highly were its services valued, that to kill one was a capital crime.

From this view of the subject, founded upon the authority of Herodotus, Hasselquist, etc., Savigny and others materially differ, and instead of recognizing the sacred ibis of Egypt in the preceding description, they define it to be the same as the *Numenius albus* of Cuvier—the more common species of the two; which they admit devoured the worms and insects which lay scattered over the muddy, nitrous precipitations of the overflowed fields of the Egyptians; and affirm that it was held sacred,—not on account of its dietetic habits, but simply as a hieroglyphical symbol of the inundation of the Nile; while they deny its generally conceded reputation as a destroyer of ophidian and other reptiles. I will only add that in respect to the *phagous* habits and uses of the bird in question, my judgment prompts me to side with the former opinion.

† The lotus is a water-lily, which grows upon the banks of streams, the edges of ponds, etc. The lotus of the Nile plays an important part in the hieroglyphical devices of the ancient Egyptians. Indeed, it was anciently everywhere deemed a sacred plant among the people of the East. According to Kreuzer, botany recognizes it under the name of *nelumbium speciosum*. It was a fundamental principle in the cosmogony of the heathens, that every thing originated from Rhea—*Reia*, fluency, or the primeval humidity, and the feminine principle of creation, in connec-

its fetters, and foaming and surging, it wildly bounds from its rocky bed, watering and quickening expiring

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tion with Saturn, or time. Such, too, was the origin of Osiris and Isis. Hence, in the first place, the lotus is the symbol of water generally, as the genetic element of nature, and of the thrice holy Nile especially. Besides, as the deities just mentioned, were both brother and sister, and wife and husband, even prior to their birth, the lotus, in its organs of fructification, the stamens and pistil, symbolizes at once this twofold relation of the celestial pair.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in the second place, as the Nile, after a period of languishment, revives again; as the land of Egypt, after a protracted drought manifests new life and vigor; and as the sun, or Osiris, dies towards the winter solstice, and subsequently arises again from death and the grave: Isis, as the moon and land of Egypt, also alternately suffering and rejoicing with her solar and Nilic spouse, so the lotus, which likewise has its reverses of fortune, or mutations of growth and decay, is again the expressive symbol of life succeeding death: a living historical evidence of the truth of the doctrine of a resurrection and of a life to come.

The lotus has its diurnal sleep and vigil, as well as its annual death-sleep and revivification. In the night, deprived of the genial solar stimulus, it folds up its leaves and petals: thus literally retiring to rest; while during the day, these organs disclose themselves again, the flower-cup enlarging itself constantly as the orb of day rises towards its meridinal altitude. Behold, everywhere are suffering and death, yet everywhere suffering and death are followed by a new life and a glorious victory! Of all these transmutations, or antagonistic elements of the powers and organic forms of nature, thus personified and allegorized, ever dying and yet living, the lotus is the pregnant symbol. Hence we find the stem, the leaves, and the blue flower of this hieroglyphical queen of plants, in a thousand combinations, decorating the works of sculpture and engraving of antiquity.

<sup>1</sup> The Egyptian lotus being described as *monogynous*, this fact evidently assigns it a place among the *Nymphæaceæ*, or water-lily family of plants, and not among the *Nelumbiæcæ*, or nelumbo-division of phytionic productions.

nature. In the month of May, the first symptoms of a swelling of the river may be observed, but before the lion makes his appearance, or, in other words, before the summer solstice, when the sun enters the zodiacal sign of Leo, the *saving* flood does not delight the eye or greet the ear of the anxiously expectant Egyptian. As soon, however, as this important astronomical event takes place, it has attained its maximum height, which, as it appears from Larcher on Herodotus, is variously estimated. "The majority of travellers inform us," writes this author, "that on an average the water usually rises every year to the height of twenty-two cubits. In 1702 it rose to twenty-three cubits, four inches; in the year preceding it rose to twenty-two cubits, eighteen inches; according to these travellers, the favorable height is from twenty-two to twenty-three cubits; according to Herodotus, from fifteen to sixteen. The difference is seven."

This striking discrepancy of opinion on a subject so interesting, and for so many ages open to the investigation of the historian and the philosopher, is remarkable, though still incomplete, as may be seen from the following statement in the *Sacred Geography* of Doctor Parish. "While the Nile overflows only to the perpendicular height of twelve cubits," says this writer, "a famine necessarily follows in Egypt, nor is the famine less certain, should it exceed sixteen cubits, as Pliny says; so that the just height of the inundation is between twelve and sixteen cubits." The Nile, now in the full *tide of prosperity*, may be said to be fairly in its *element*. It rushes with irresistible impetuosity over the cata-



racts, and roaring and dashing, still augmenting its giant proportions; and still accelerating its unbridled velocity, it arrives in Egypt, mocking all barriers and despising every restraint, the country of the Pharaohs, from the environs of Syene to the Mediterranean, is, if history merits credit, a vast archipelago, and the inhabitants are suddenly converted from landmen into Argonauts; and boats are now their principal and often their only means of intercommunication.\* At last the twenty-fourth day of September dawns upon a people buoyed on the pinions of ecstatic hope: it is a day of festivity and rejoicing throughout all Egypt. It is now that, under the shouts and pæans of the happy votaries of the Nile,

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\*The inundations of the Nile have been more or less extensive in different ages of the world. A few facts may serve to illustrate this proposition. "The country of Egypt," says the clerical geographer above quoted, "is not overflown, as some writers have asserted. In Upper Egypt the high banks always prevent the expansion of the water. No part is overflown except the lower part of the Delta; the lands near the river are watered by machines, and where the breadth of the country renders it necessary, canals are cut to lead the water from the river; while two hundred thousand oxen are employed in drawing water from the pits and canals to irrigate their fields and gardens." Memphis was south of the Delta, and yet there was a time when the country above it was subject to the inundations of the Nile, as it appears from the testimony of the Father of History. "In the reign of Mæris," writes he, "as soon as the river rose to eight cubits, *all* the lands above Memphis were overflowed; since which a period of about nine hundred years has elapsed: but at present, unless the river rises to sixteen, or at least fifteen cubits, its waters do not reach those lands." This change in the inundation of the Nile, is attributed to an increased elevation of its banks.



the sluices of the beneficent stream are opened; and that couriers are sent in every direction through the country to announce the propitious event: everywhere the gay notes of gladness may be heard; pleasure beams from every eye, and every countenance is radiant with the realization of a better hope; and thus one of the greatest and most interesting anniversary-jubilees of the nation, ushers in its inundation-celebration.\*

In the foregoing disquisition, the striking physical and agrarian elements peculiar to an Egyptian year, though wrought up into an allegorical myth, cannot have failed to arrest the attention of the reader, and to excite in him a wish to learn more of the theological system of the people of the Nile: people early and justly renowned for their varied wisdom and superior civilization. According to Diodorus Siculus, it was the custom of the people of the Nile to present as an offering to the dead Osiris, their wasted and shrivelled river, three hundred and sixty vessels filled with milk: a number corresponding to the days in the old Egyptian year.

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\* In its more extensive inundations, Herodotus informs us, the Nile does not only overflow the Delta, but a part of the Lybian and Arabian frontiers, extending, on an average, two days' journey on each side. I may add, that though the inundation of the Nile does not, as a general thing, wholly cover the more elevated situations of the Delta, or lower part of Egypt; yet to provide against any sudden emergency, the houses of the inhabitants are usually built upon artificial mounds to secure them against an extraordinary rise of the water, either from natural or accidental causes.

A similar practice was observed at Acanthus, where the priests every day poured water taken from the Nile from three hundred and sixty urns into a barrel which was full of holes. This singular observance may have served the double purpose of noting diurnal time and of vividly representing its transient nature. Horus—the sun in the summer solstice, now begins to play an important part in this interesting and complex myth. From April till that period of the year when this solar lion appears, Typhon reigns, or, in other words, scorching heat and fatal diseases prevail in Egypt. The earth but lately clothed in the verdant robe of life and beauty, is dried up: Isis has become a withered mummy, and the face of nature presents a desolate and mournful aspect. Horus, the intense heat of midsummer, assumes the reins in our planetary system, and the blessings of the Nile are revived; the murdered Osiris is revenged, and he rises up from death, and lives again in Horus, his mighty son: the sun in the vigor of its meridian altitude and glory, generating the greatest degree of light and heat; bringing about the Nilic flood, and making Egypt fair and fruitful like a paradise planted and tilled by God; eradicating the seeds of pestilential miasmas; banishing want and sad forebodings from the land; and proving himself the physical savior of his devoted worshippers.

## CHAPTER II.

THE CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE PERSONIFICATION  
AND SYMBOLOGY OF THE EGYPTIAN YEAR, CONSID-  
ERED IN ITS SIDERAL AND AGRARIAN ATTRIBUTES.

*Preface.*

ACCORDING to the elaborate metaphysical system of the Egyptian priests, Osiris is the Supreme Being. To form a true conception of this article of heathen faith, it will be necessary again briefly to advert to the doctrine of emanation, or evolution, common among the ancient oriental people. Agreeably to it, the *God of gods* is not merely contemplated as a unity, but also analyzed and personified according to his attributes; and this species of analysis of the highest branch of metaphysics, is conducted in such a manner as to hypostatize or individualize every inherent quality of the Supreme Being. And as each attribute of God is God, or identical with the entire Godhead, it follows that every *adjective* evolution of the Deity, as Osiris, considered in its highest potency, is itself the Supreme Being; or, in other words, Osiris is one of the manifestations of the Eternal, hypostatized, first, as Amun, or Ammon-Jupiter, or as might, inasmuch as he reveals or brings to light the hidden ideas or prototypes of the material world; secondly, as Phthas or wisdom, implying his demiurgic perfection, inasmuch as he *realizes* the ideal world, and stamps upon it the completion which unerring truth

and the highest artistic skill alone can confer; thirdly, as Osiris or goodness, inasmuch as he is beneficent and the author of all good gifts, the source of all life and every blessing.

Osiris was the name which the Supreme Deity bore in the popular belief of the Egyptians; but in the metaphysical or sacerdotal creed, Osiris was called Kneph, or Ammon, names which correspond to the *Agathodaimon* among the Greeks, and under which he held the same superior rank. In his vulgar acceptation, however, he is the sun, and as such the adoptive son of Amun or Ammon; that is, Osiris the sun, or the fountain of material light and heat, is merely an emanation of Kneph, or Ammon, the source of metaphysical light and empyrean fire. Lastly, Osiris as the Nile, is nothing else, as Plutarch observes, but an emanation, a reflected ray, of the God of light, or Kneph, considered as the materialized blessing of water.

#### PARAGRAPH I.

##### *Osiris.*

As the son of Aurora, Osiris is identical with Memnon. Hence in his annual solar resurrection from death, he is Osiris Memnon: the young but growing sun. The hieroglyphical eye is Osiris, or the sun in its culmination, when it is in the sign of Leo.\* Osiris, or the sun in Taurus, is the second

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\* In the age to which the text refers, the constellations of the zodiac and the signs of the ecliptic still corresponded, and the summer solstice occurred in Leo and not in Cancer, as at present.

stage or mode of the vernal sun, whereas in Aries, the sun is not Osiris, but Ammon, or Amun — the first light or solar phasis of incipient spring. Amun and Ammon being synonymous terms, and expressive of the same god, Osiris, in view of the facts just stated, is said to be the adopted son of Amun, or according to the Greek version of the myth, of Jupiter-Ammon.\* When the sun is in Taurus, at the time of the new moon, and therefore in conjunction with the queen of night, our myth, according to the laws of allegorical interpretation, teaches us that Osiris, or the sun-taurus, impregnates the moon-vacca, or Isis, and that then vegetation begins to flourish upon the earth; that is, the solar influence, considered as a masculine power, communicates the principles of vegetation when it overshadows the moon, and the comely and precious fruit of this sidereal union, is vegetable life and beauty. Here Osiris and Isis are represented to us at once as the *deities* and as the *powers* of nature, and as being virtually the same as the Eswara and Isi of the ancient Hindoos. At last the son of Amun, Osiris, gets to be Amun himself: the son absorbing the father or resuming his primeval union with him, and being thus one with him, and he is now, metaphysically contemplated, the Supreme Being himself. During the period of the winter solstice, Osiris becomes Harpocrates: his rays shot forth obliquely from death and the grave, are pale and powerless, but no sooner has the sun begun to ascend

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\* Jupiter is derived from *jurans pater*, assisting the father. Osiris, or Jupiter, therefore, is the immediate emanation of Ammon, the first begotten son of the father!

from the southern to the northern tropic, or entered the sign of Capricorn, than Osiris manifests himself in the incipient stages of a new life and strength, or is the juvenile Hercules, who in the winter period of his existence and reign, is the analogue of the adolescent Harpocrates in spring. Horus, as has been already stated, is Osiris in the sign of Leo, and like his great sire, he often appears with the head of a hawk, which differs only from the same symbol of the father in the brighter hues of its plumage.\*

The Egyptians defined and adored three orders of gods, and in the vigor of his strength and the glory of his reign, Osiris claimed and received a place in the first, while in his passion and death he descended to the inferiority of the third. In this state of humility and passive endurance, his supreme godhead was graciously associated with earth and humanity, and he was emphatically — *god in the flesh* ! X It is entirely erroneous to suppose that any of the Egyptian deities have been mere mortals, deified on account of heroic deeds, or eminent social virtues: these people, as is proved by the annals of their history and the genius of their religion, never practised or sanctioned apotheosis. On the contrary, the germ and essence of the Egyptian religion, is the devout contemplation of nature in its admirable laws and

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\* The sacred hawk of the Egyptians, is of large size and brown color. Its eyes are exceedingly bright, and hence the eye of this bird was the honored symbol under which the ancient Egyptians worshipped Horus and Osiris, as the sun in its various phases of greatest power, and refulgent splendor. It deserves further to be remarked, that in his culminating might and dazzling majesty, Horus is emphatically known as *Arúeris*.



wonderful manifestations, and the recognition and worship of a superintending providence, under the diversified forms of personification. Among the hieroglyphical symbols which illustrate and define the theological creed that forms the theme of our discussion, a scourge grasped by the hand of a god, was indicative of power and authority. Sitting upon the flower-cup of the lotus, imports that the regenerative waters of the Nile shall never fail, and that life shall never be annihilated.

In the opinion of Jomard, based upon his researches among the antiquities of Egypt, the accouchement of Isis implies the winter solstice, and the incipient growth of vegetation at that season in Egypt — the period in the winter signs of the ecliptic when the North pole begins again to lean towards the sun. The infant god, nourished at the breast of Isis, signifies both the commencement of vegetable growth, and the increase of the days from the first of January when the earth is in perihelion. As a symbol of filial love, Osiris bears the head of the *hoopoo* on his staff or sceptre; because, as it is asserted, the bird responding to this name, supported and cherished its superannuated and helpless parents: a noble trait of disinterested affection and self-denial, which it must be honorable for a god to excite, or useful to imitate! A sphinx presenting an image of Canobus, a god whose head is human, while the remainder of the body assumes a globular form, and is supposed to represent the spherical Nile-cup, is emblematical of the fact that this cup is the mysterious mundane cup, containing the primordial elements of fire and water; and that being offered to

the great god of nature, he is to determine the just proportion of the mixture.

Serapis also appears under the symbolical figure of Canopus. After the era of Alexander the Great, that god assumed the place of Osiris, and was at once a beneficent and a malignant deity, uniting Osiris and Typhon in one person ; yet in such proportions that the Osirian attributes in his character predominated over the Typhonian. According to Jablonski, Serapis is the sun in autumn, as Harpocrates is the feeble, obscured winter-sun ; while Ammon, and to a certain extent Hercules, under the appellation of Som, symbolize the god of day in the vernal equinox.

#### PARAGRAPH II.

##### *Hercules.*

Hercules appears in the category of those gods, who benignantly control the year, and who are at once the year and the gods of the year. As the infant sun, or the sun in the sign of Aries, he passed under the name of Som or Sem. This place in Egyptian theogony, is in the second order of the twelve great gods of the Nile. As such, he is the same as the Olympian Hercules of the Greeks, to whom those people offered divine honors ; while to the son of Amphitryon or Alcmena, the fictitious personification of the former, they simply paid the rites of a hero. As Som or Som-Hercules, in the more extensive import of the term, he is not only the personification of the struggling or wrestling year, but also of virtue, *âreté*, as well as of the fiery energy of ethi-

cal enthusiasm. He is a beneficent divinity, and allied by the closest consanguinity to the good god Osiris. Like Osiris, he is an emanation of the supreme and immortal divinity, and Amun, the primeval source of light, is his illustrious sire.\* To him his eyes are steadily directed from the zodiacal mansion of Aries; and, submissive to his parental behest, he diligently pursued the sidereal path pointed out to him as the sphere of his actions, and the bright domain of his power. Hercules is emphatically the propitious power, manifested in the blessings which the prolific waters of the Nile disseminate over Egypt. When it is asserted of him that he gagged or strangled Antæus, the son of Posidon and the earth,† the meaning is that he overcame, or at least effectually resisted the destructive sand-showers of this ill-willed giant of the desert, by the opposing flood of the Nile, and the introduction of canals into the Delta, especially towards the Lybian desert, and making them of such a width that the stifling winds of that arid and arenaceous region, could no longer

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\* The Greeks derive his origin from Zeus, their Pater-Deus, and Asteria — a derivation which is essentially the same as the Egyptian; but in the language of their oracles, they called him simply Asteria's son, and understood Venus by the astral goddess. According to both genealogical accounts, this god is therefore an evolution or efflux of the immaterial fire; the rudimentary germ of the creative principle — Pan-Mendes.

† As Hercules, in the course of the annual cycle, succeeded Osiris, so Antæus assumed the place of Typhon: each divinity had his distinct trials and enjoyments. Hercules, in particular, shared not only the prosperous, but also the adverse events, in the life of the kindred deity Osiris.

drive the sands across the ample channels. Steadily persevering in the execution of a laudable enterprise, he opposed an additional barrier to the devastating encroachments of the obnoxious and justly dreaded sands, by opening numerous ducts for the purpose of irrigation; and by thus wisely intersecting Lower Egypt with a seasonable and healthful aqueous circulation, he happily succeeded in still more effectually vanquishing Antæus, the surly, mischievous monarch of sand-plains and sand-storms.

Hercules alone, the puissant god, and invincible wrestler, could accomplish labors at once so extensive, so arduous, and so useful: no wonder that mythic fame accorded to him the honor of sustaining the weight of heaven upon his Atlas shoulders! His name and daring still survive in the record of the *Heracleian* canal. Numerous cities bore his name and commemorated his deeds; and they were all situated at the mouth of the Nile, or on the banks of the canals: thus proclaiming to future ages that next to the Nile, Hercules was the most munificent dispenser of water to the often thirsty, ay, parched land of Egypt; the most renowned hero-god; and the illustrious prototype of the Jewish patriarch's viceroyal son, whose name and merits rank among those of the earliest and most successful patrons of *internal improvement*. In reference to Egypt, he is therefore properly surnamed Canobus, or the god of the waters; and the Canobian and the Heracleian mouths of the Nile, are synonymous phrases. When Hercules is represented as being in a state of subjugation to superior powers; as suffering or doomed to servitude; as dying or being dead, etc., the meaning is, that, re-

garded as the sun, he suffered a periodical imbecility and partial obscuration in the winter season of his reign; or, considered in his character of Canobus, that in the hot and arid division of the year, the waters in his canals and ditches were dried up by the burning breath of the Typhonian Antæus, and the devastating sands of this restless and determined foe, encroached upon his patriotic works, and sadly marred the fair features of his domain. In the declining state of his solar life just referred to, Hercules, the sun-god, is *Sandacus*, the sun exhausted and dissolved in his connubial devotion to Pharnace, or the moon, his celestial consort: \* this interpretation of

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\* The Egyptians, like other nations, divided time into cycles or periods of a greater or less extent. One of these cycles comprised the solar year, or the space of three hundred and sixty-five days, and was personified under the name of Som-Hercules, the potent wrestler in the solar orbit. Hence it is that we find Hercules, the valiant son of the resplendent Ammon, take his dominant station in Aries, and bravely, no less than wisely, control the varying year amid many and severe labors; for the celebrated *twelve labors* of this martial god, are nothing else but the annual revolution of the sun in the path of the ecliptic, and the successive allegorical conflict in each zodiacal stage with the unpropitious cosmic powers, travestied by the licentious fancy of the Greek poets. The solar year was symbolized by the *golden circle* of king Osymandyas. It played a conspicuous part among the architectural decorations of the Egyptians, and was divided into three hundred and sixty-five segments. The only other cycle of time I shall mention here, is the *phœnix* cycle. It derives its appellative distinction from the fabled but famous bird called *phœnix*. This hieroglyphical bird is represented as perched upon the hand of Hercules. A star, the emblem of Sirius, and a balance, significant of the summer solstice, defined and illustrated its symbolical importance. Its head is ornamented with a tuft of feathers; its



the name Sandacus, contains a strong inkling of poetic extravagance, and could hardly have been considered orthodox among a people whose faith is generally defined with the earnestness of prosaic sobriety.

### PARAGRAPH III.

#### *Typhon.*

One of the symbols of Typhon is the ass, which, in an agrarian point of view, is the converse of the ox, so advantageously employed in the honorable pursuit of agriculture, and the venerated emblem of Osiris. Unable or unwilling to avail himself of another mode of progression, he sallies forth mounted upon an ass when he seeks to waylay Horus, the

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wings, according to Herodotus, are partly of a gold, and partly of a ruby color; and its form and size perfectly correspond to the contour and dimensions of the *bird of heaven* — the eagle: it is also recognized in the form of a winged genius in human shape. This emphatically astronomical bird, at the expiration of the great Sirius year, comprising a period of fourteen hundred and sixty-one years, used regularly to come from the East, we are told, bearing the ashes of its defunct sire, and depositing them in the temple of the sun at Heliopolis; that is, a new cycle of Serial time commenced or succeeded the old! It is further to be observed that at the termination of the fourteen hundred and sixty-one years, and at the time of the new moon during the summer solstice, the fixed agrarian and the vague ecclesiastical year of the Egyptians, exactly coincided. This event filled all Egypt with unbounded joy, and attested the perfection and triumph of the astronomical science of the priests, especially the most erudite among them — those of Heliopolis. Owing to the facts before us, the phoenix was a leading type of the resurrection among the ancients, and regarded emphatically as the bird of time.



Egyptian Apollo, whom his mother Latona, or Isis, has taken the precaution to secrete in the isle of Buto.

Owing to this circumstance, the ass is sacrificed to Horus, the inveterate enemy of darkness and misrule. According to Plutarch, the crocodile and the hippopotamus are likewise symbols of the lurid and mischievous god. As to the signification of the term Typhon, it appears from Jablonski's "Pantheon of Egypt," that it is *ventus malignus ac nocivus*, noxious or destructive wind.\* Typhon figures also under the appellation of *Bebon*, *Babys*, or *Baby*, which, says the same author, imports the latent wind in subterranean caverns. *Smy*, too, is a title to which he does not hesitate to respond: it denotes tabid, or consumed. Besides, his Typhonian majesty is distinguished by the cognomen *Seth*, which is synonymous with ass-colt. Typhon appears armed with a heavy club and a long knife, and thus equipped he has the temerity

\* One genealogy traces the descent of Typhon to Tartarus and Terra; decorates the upper part of his person with a hundred heads like those of a serpent or dragon; and furnishes him with a mouth and eyes, from which dart flames of devouring fire. Having stated that the *lurid god* was the most eminent of those giants that presumed to wage war against heaven, Tooke thus proceeds: "Typhæus, or Typhon, the son of Juno, *had no father*. So vast was his magnitude, that he touched the east with one hand and the west with the other, and the heavens with the crown of his head. A hundred dragon's heads grew from his shoulders; his body was covered with feathers, scales, rugged hair, and adders; from the ends of his fingers snakes issued, and his two feet had the shape and fold of a serpent's body; his eyes sparkled with fire, and his mouth belched out flames. He was at last overcome, and thrown down—from heaven; and lest he should rise again, the whole island of Sicily was laid upon him."

to attempt even the life of the good mother Isis. Notwithstanding the great and manifold evils with which this ill-natured and mischief-plotting deity visited mankind, he could boast of his Typhonias or temples, his sacrifices, and his worshippers. In a small temple at Carnac, he condescends to appear under a variety of symbolical attributes ; and once in the grotesque form of a swine, with the breasts of a woman, while the inferior parts of his body are composed of the heterogeneous elements of a man, a dog, and a lion.

In the hypogeums of Thebes, Nephthys, the charming spouse of his satanic excellency, is represented with prolonged mammæ, and both she and her respectable consort, are seen embodied in the beautiful artistic idea, compounded of the figure of a swine, the paws of a lion, the head of a hippopotamus, and the arms of a man! Typhon, as well as Osiris, must die, and Horus proves himself his willing executioner. Blood cries for blood: the avenging hand is raised; and, armed with a spear, the son of Osiris plunges the deadly weapon into the hippopotamus-body of the malignant god: he dies. Alas! that he should again revive! Thus did Horus recompense the perfidious author of so many insults and wrongs, as basely as undeservedly inflicted upon himself, his family, and his people. Hercules now appears upon the stage, and the interminable war against the Proteus-like Typhon is renewed. The recent victim of a deeply outraged divinity, fearlessly arrays himself against his stalwart opponent, under the name and in the character of his old foe Antæus. It was Satan thus metamorphosed, whom

Hercules, in defence of justice and the common good, was obliged to gag with a thong. Antæus, or Antäus, like his worthy prototypes, reigns east and west of the banks of the Nile, in the deserts of Arabia and Lybia, and indeed, wherever scorching heat, simoon-winds, and sand-showers exert their baleful sway. This name is etymologically deduced from the extensive sand-plains and sand-dunes which constitute his dismal empire: the debris-production of the sea and the desert. One of his strong-holds, the principal seat of his pernicious power, and the flagitious work of his own hands, was situated in the Arabian division of his arid and arenose dominions. It bore his name, and the recollection of it still lives in the records of archæology. A memorial of the name and exploits of this formidable sand-god, was also transmitted to posterity in the foundation of the ancient city of Antæopolis, the locality of which was defined by a long and profound chasm in the vicinity of the Arabian mountains.

In the person of Busiris, we are likewise required to acknowledge a Typhonian evolution or transformation; but as his functions and qualities are similar to the life and attributes of the rest of his inimical race, I deem it unnecessary to pursue a subject, which has already been sufficiently elucidated to enable the reader to form an accurate idea of its metaphorical character and signification.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE EGYPTIAN THEORY OF THE WORLD, AND THE WORSHIP OF SACRED ANIMALS OR HIERO-ZOOLATRY.

## PARAGRAPH I.

*Their Theory of the World.*

ACCORDING to Proclus, the Egyptians postulated three orders or emanations of gods: a fact which the beginning of the present century still attested in the extant zodiacs in the small town of Tentyra on the Nile. Directing our vision towards the upper part of the cupulo, in which this ancient specimen of the astronomical theology of the Egyptians is perpetuated, we discover quite at the top the twelve great or calendarian gods, symbolized in the twelve signs of the zodiac. Each of these twelve gods has his three satellites called Decani, and also known as the demons or ethereal gods of Hermes, the personification of the soul or intelligent principle of the universe. Each of the Decani, likewise has two adjuncts, and thus divinity is divided and subdivided until the circumference of the pneumatological zodiac, comprising three hundred and sixty degrees, extends in twelve homo-centric pyramids to the centre of the earth. Every one of these zodiacal pyramids has its presiding demon, just as the twelve great mundane gods are governed by the supreme divinity, recognized as Ammon or Kneph. These deities regulate the seasons and the cycles of time of our

planetary system; and hence the ancient division of annual time into hebdomads, or weeks of *seven* days, and years of twelve months. We here perceive a vast, theocosmic system, whose apex terminates in unity, and which proclaims the interesting and important truth, that all the gods are essentially but one god, as all the suns and planets are but one world.

The entire heaven, or the world considered as supernal, is marked out into numerous compartments and distributed among the celestial rulers, while the uppermost regions, extending downwards from the pyramidal zenith of the universe to the moon, appertain preëminently to *the gods*, according to their several ranks and orders. The first and highest among them are the twelve *ŭper-auranioi*, or supercelestial gods, with their subordinate demons. After these follow the *egkosmioi*, or intercosmic gods, of whom each also presides over a number of demons, to whom he imparts his power, and who rejoice to bear his name. Within the ample limits of these demons, gravitates the centre of all things. The demons, receiving their power and influence from the gods, whose subalterns they are, produce the plants and animals, infusing into them their own energies, thus replenishing the world, and uniting into one stupendous whole the four spheres of the universe: the supercelestial, the celestial, and the super and sublunar spheres.

There are six orders of demons. The first is *sui generis*, and has a truly divine nature. These highest demons link the souls in the bodies: the effluxes of the *Father*, to the gods. The second order, still

remarkable for high intellectual attributes, has the supervision of the souls as they enter or leave the bodies: they make creation manifest. The third imparts to the *divine* souls who enter into bodies for the benefit of *common* souls, the second degree of creative power, while it sheds upon them the higher influences. The fourth bestows upon the individualized natures, or distinct forms of being, the active powers, or principles of synthetic or concrete existence; as, life, order, ideas, and the means of perfectibility which are at the disposal of the gods. The fifth order of demons, possessing bodily similitude — *sōmatæides*, hold together, sustain, and preserve all the elements of the terrestrial body, after the sample of the eternal body: the ideal body and type and source of all bodies. As to the demons of the sixth and last order, they are charged with the care of *ulē*, or matter, and it is their business to superintend the powers which descend from the heavenly *ulē* into the terrestrial *ulē*, and to preserve the outlines — *skiagraphiai*, of the ideas in matter.

As the upper celestial sphere has its subdivisions of beings, so has the lower; and according to a fixed law of pneumatology, the inferior beings always act in subserviency to the superior. The sphere of the moon, the air, the fire, and the water, etc., are all filled with demons, who are of an elastic, ethereal nature, and who officiate as intermediate agents between the gods and mankind. They preside over the elements and organic life. Upon them depend the growth, the inflorescence, the virtue, and the perfection of plants; and hence all plants which bloom in any given month or under a particular zodiacal sign,



are decidedly influenced by the god to whom such sign or month is sacred! Behold the origin of sacred plants, and the foundation of pharmacy!

#### PARAGRAPH II.

##### *The worship of Sacred Animals, or Hiero-zöolatry.*

Ancient Egypt was a vast menagerie of sacred animals, whose ample roof was the vault of heaven; and from the confines of Thebes or Disopolis to the mouth of the Nile at Canobus, the whole country teemed with hiero-animal life. As every department of heaven had its zodiacal animal and its zodiacal habitation adapted to it, so every canton had its sacred animal and its temple, in which it received the most scrupulous attention of its votaries. To some extent, at least, these animals symbolized in their instincts and habits, the phenomena and changes incident to the solar year, and they might, therefore, with some propriety be regarded as the natural chronometers of the different periods of time. Thus the vernal season and the rutting period of the ram are coincident; the increased frequency and loudness of the sonorous cries of the lion, mark the hot part of the year; a roving, restless manner distinguishes the conduct of the goat after the rainy season has set in; and the vigilant, spying nature of the dog, announcing the approach of man or beast, makes him a fit emblem of Sirius, or the dog-star, which, as soon as it has ascended above the horizon, proclaims the approaching flood of the Nile. The sacred animals were not always the same in the

different cantons or cities of Egypt;\* and if we reflect that that country had upwards of thirty cantons, or nomes, beside a great many cities, it must have

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\* In his Dictionary of the Bible, the late Professor Alexander informs us that Egypt was divided into *about* thirty-six nomes or counties; that it was once very populous, and contained *about twenty thousand cities*; and that its greatest length, from north to south, was six hundred, and its greatest breadth, from east to west, three hundred miles. According to this statement, founded upon the authority of Herodotus, a city is allowed for every nine square miles, a phenomenon which, with all proper deference for the high worth and honored memory of the Professor, is positively incredible, unless we ignore all ideas by which the term city is usually defined. Speaking of the populousness of ancient Egypt, Diodorus Siculus says, "In a general account once taken of the inhabitants, they amounted to *seven millions*, and there are no less than three millions at present. Assuming, however, with Doctor Parish that Egypt at one period contained *eight millions* of inhabitants, a city on an average could have numbered no more than *four hundred persons*! In what light Savary viewed this subject, may be seen from the following observations: "Ancient Egypt supplied food to eight millions of inhabitants, and to Italy and the neighboring provinces likewise. At present the estimate is not one half. I do not think, with Herodotus and Pliny, that this kingdom contained twenty thousand cities in the time of Amasis: but the astonishing ruins everywhere to be found, and in uninhabited places, prove they must have been thrice as numerous as they are." A brief notice of the population of modern Egypt, as it has been defined and illustrated by Volney, will conclude this disquisition. "It is impracticable," says the French traveller, "to form a just estimate of the population of Egypt. Nevertheless, as it is known that the number of towns and villages does not exceed two thousand three hundred, and the number of inhabitants in each of them, one with another, including Cairo itself, is not more than a thousand, the total cannot be more than two millions three hundred thousand."

made a material difference in the expense incident upon the support of the symbolical animals, — and these alone strictly deserve to be regarded as the sacred animals of the Egyptians, whether the whole number of them was distributed in groups over the country, each part providing for a certain portion of them, or whether all of them had to be supported in every place in which such animals were kept, thus multiplying the cost of their maintenance to an enormous extent, without deriving any additional advantage in support of science or religion.

At Thebes, the sun-city of Ammon, the ram was worshipped; at Chemmis, or Achmin, Hermopolis, and Mendes, located at the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, goats, especially males, were esteemed sacred, and dedicated to Pan or Jupiter. The city Mendes derived its appellation from the sacred goat which it cherished in its midst as the repository or the symbol of divinity; an appellation which, according to Jablonski, denotes the generative power of nature, especially of the sun, while in the opinion of Champollion, it implies an *island*. Mythology, however, leaves no room to doubt that the hieroglyphical goat and the holy city of Pan, were both theocosmically distinguished by the term Mendes. Again, at Cyropolis the dogs, at Lycopolis the wolves, at Bubastis the cats, and at Tachompsø the crocodiles, in the Coptic called Champsæ, were served with religious zeal and solemn rites. There were, however, sacred animals which were common to the whole country; as the bull, the cow, the dog, the cat, the ibis, the hawk, and the scarabæus — the symbol of the masculine principle of fecundity, and noticed on

a former occasion.\* A few of the sacred animals towered far above the rest in sanctity and hieroglyphical importance, and these were the three holy bulls known as Mnevis, Onuphis, and Apis. The first was symbolically adored at Heliopolis; was of a black color; had bristly hair; and symbolized the sun—probably in its inferior orbit. Onuphis was likewise black; had shaggy, recurved hair; and is supposed to have been the emblem of the retroceding sun. As the representative or image of divinity, he was distinguished by the appellations of good god, good spirit, etc. Apis was the offspring of a cow, asserted and believed to have been impregnated by a ray of light from heaven. It was necessary that he should be of a black color, with the exception of two white spots, one of a triangular shape upon the forehead, and another in the form of a half-moon, upon the right side, etc. As soon as this living symbol of Osiris was found, he was conveyed in triumphal procession to a temporary abode, where, during the space of four months, he was attended and fed with the greatest care, in a building the east side of which was uninclosed. At the expiration of this period, a festival of rejoicing was proclaimed, which began at the new moon. As soon as the solemnities were concluded, Apis was conducted to Heliop-

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\* Kreuzer, on the authority of Porphyry and others, says of this insect that its *impelleted* eggs are hatched in the ground after a period of twenty-eight days; adding that it was therefore an emblem of the revolution of the moon round its axis; and that its alternate semi-annual existence above and beneath the earth, makes it the symbol of the sun in the northern and southern tropic.

olis, where he had the honor to have every attention shown to him by the priests, during an interval of forty days. This time having elapsed, he was finally brought to Memphis, and duly installed in the temple of Phthah, where his presence was recognized in clouds of precious incense and splendid offerings. If he died, or the time arrived when he had to make room for a successor—which happened at the termination of the Apis-period, or the lunar cycle of twenty-five *civil* years,\* there was universal mourning throughout Egypt until another Apis was found: the dead one was either publicly entombed in the temple of Serapis, or elsewhere privately interred. Apis was the symbol of Osiris, considered as the sun, as the Nile, and as the principle of fructification; and in consequence of the connection of Osiris thus defined with Isis, Apis also symbolized this goddess, regarded as the moon, the fertile earth, and material nature.

Some light is shed upon the origin and nature of sacred animals, by Eberhard in his *Geist des Urchristenthums*. “According to Mosheim, on the intellectual system of Cudworth,” says he, “the sacred animals of the Egyptians were originally *Fetissos*. This phrase, which the French language has converted into *Fetiches*, is Portuguese, and signifies *chosefée*, a divine agent that communicates oracles. Upon their arrival on the western coast of Africa, the

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\* According to the Egyptian creed, Osiris appeared in the flesh at the expiration of every twenty-five years: a ray of heaven or the sun impregnated a cow, and the fruit of this solar-overshadowing was Apis.



Portuguese found that some of the natives worshipped trees, stones, animals, etc., which they believed animated by a *Maribou*, or divinity. A fetich is therefore matter, in some form or another, in which a god resides. There is no doubt that while the Egyptians still continued to be in a state of barbarism, they worshipped their sacred animals as fetiches. Even after they had assumed an agrarian life, the sun, the moon, the Nile, etc., were included among their national fetiches which, under the similitude of man or beast, were represented as Osiris, Isis, Horus, etc. However, all these *images were hieroglyphics*, by which they expressed their complex astronomical and agrarian calendar, and which, being displayed in their temples, a knowledge of it was readily and universally communicated."

The following, taken from Doctor Priestley's *Remarks* on the "Origin of all Religion," by Dupis, and Walz's *Erklärung des Kalenders*, etc., is calculated to throw additional light upon this subject. "Since *capricorn*, or the *wild goat*," says the former, "naturally gets into the most elevated situations, browsing on what he can find on the highest mountains, it was thought to suit the place in the heavens from which the sun begins to ascend from the southern to the northern tropic. And the *crab* being an animal that goes backwards, it was thought to suit that tropic from which the sun begins to descend, and return to his former place." In the opinion of the latter, the zodiacal signs were originated when the Egyptians were chiefly devoted to a nomadic life, and he thinks that they named the constellation in the east, which was visible above the horizon just before the sun



arose in the first month of spring, the ram or lamb, because at that season the most lambs were yeaned, and because a principal source of their wealth consisted in their flocks. For similar reasons, he thinks, they conferred the appellation of taurus, or bull, upon the second month. Conceiving the lion to be of a *hot* nature, they denominated the constellation which seemed to be the harbinger of the morning sun, during the hottest part of the year, the lion. The scorpion being a poisonous insect, its name was given to the orient constellation which marked the daily reappearance of the sun during the period of the year when dangerous diseases prevailed.\* The only constellation which remains for me to notice, in this place, is that of Pisces, thus distinguished, according to our author, because during the month in which it might be seen in the eastern horizon before sunrise, it was the season for fishing.

Though the Egyptians entertained a peculiar veneration for the animals of their country, and were obliged by law to cherish them, yet the intelligent members of the community did never consider any of them to be gods in an absolute sense, nor worship them as such; but, on the contrary, they simply regarded and treated them as sacred, in respect to their hieroglyphical character and uses, or if in the opinion of strangers and the vulgar, they paid divine honors to any of them, *that* opinion is to be discarded as erroneous and absurd, as the worship was not in-

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\* The sickly season in Egypt begins much earlier than the period of Scorpio, yet it may extend its ravages into autumn. — G.

tended for the sacred beasts, but for the divinity which animated them, or of whom they were the significant symbols. "In the presence of these animals," says Herodotus, "the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows. They address themselves as supplicants to the *divinity*, who is supposed to be *represented* by the animal in whose presence they are."\* The Egyptians sacrificed many of their sacred animals and feasted upon their flesh; would they have done this if they had thought them to be gods? The idea is monstrous! That the common people — ignorant as they undoubtedly were in that age of the world — may have been *bonâ fide* believers in the absolute divinity of cats and dogs, and worshipped them as such, I feel no hesitation to admit; but that such was the creed and the practice of the elite of the nation, I boldly deny.

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\* Beloe.

## SECTION II.

### THE COSMOGONY AND THEOLOGY OF THE HINDOOS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE COSMOGONY OF THE HINDOOS.

ACCORDING to M. Polier's *Mythologie des Indous*, the following account, interspersed with comments and quotations by Creuzer, comprises the Hindoo history of the creation of the world: "In the primordial state of the creation, the rudimental universe, submerged in water, reposed in the bosom of the Eternal. Brahma, the architect of the world, poised on a lotus leaf, floated upon the waters, and all that he was able to discern with his eight eyes (Brahma has four heads) was water and darkness.\* Amid

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\* According to the cosmogonic theory of the Egyptians, an illimitable darkness, called Athor, or mother-night, and regarded as the primeval element of mundane existence, covered the abyss; while water and a subtile spirit *pneuma*, resided through divine power, in chaos. A holy light now shone, the elements condensed or were precipitated beneath the sand from the humid parts of rudi-

scenes so ungenial and dismal, the god sank into a profound revery, when he thus soliloquized: 'Who am I? Whence am I?' In this state of abstraction, Brahma continued during the period of a century of years of the gods, without apparent benefit or a solution of his inquiries, a circumstance which caused him great uneasiness of mind.\* Suddenly he heard the voice, "Direct your prayer to Bhagavant — the Eternal, known, also, as Parabrahma. Brahma, rising from his natatory position, seats himself upon the lotus in an attitude of contemplation, and reflects upon the Eternal, who now appears in the form of a man with a thousand heads: Brahma still prays. This evidence of his piety is pleasing to the Eternal, and therefore he dispersed the primeval darkness, and opened his understanding." In his capacity of *mover of the waters*, Brahma is recognized under the name of *Narajan*, and as such he is still represented in an image of blue marble in the *great cistern* at Catmandu.

As a symbol of this god, the water-lily — the lotus of the Egyptians — continues to this day to be revered

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mentary creation, and nature, thus fecundated, the gods disseminated through space, etc.

\* In the Institutes of Menu, the following comparative estimate is given of the years of the gods: "A month of mortals is a day and a night of the Pitri's, or patriarchs inhabiting the moon. A year of mortals is a day and night of the gods, or regents of the universe round the north pole. Twelve thousand divine years is called the age of the gods, and a thousand such years is a day of Brahma. His night has equal duration." — Doctor Priestley's "Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other ancient nations, etc."

in the temples of the Hindoos, in Thibet and Nepaul; and a Nepaulese bowed reverently before this sacred plant as he noticed it in entering the study of Sir William Jones. It appears from this author's work, *Dissertations Relating to Asia*, that even before they germinate, the seeds of the lotus contain perfectly formed leaves, nature thus giving us a specimen of the *preformation* of its productions. It deserves further to be remarked, that the lotus is the emblem of the generative power of nature through the media of fire and water; and that it accompanies the images of all the Hindoo gods, who personify the idea of creation or generation. Hence it is said in the Bhagavat Geeta, according to Herder's *Vorwelt*, "Eternal! I see Brahma the creator enthroned in thee above the lotus." \*

The darkness being dispersed and Brahma's understanding opened, the first act of the creation of the ideal world unrolled itself, and the future creator of the visible universe beheld in the archetypical exhibitions of the Eternal, buried as it were in a profound sleep, all the infinite forms of the terrestrial world.† At this crisis, the Eternal uttered the behest, "Brahma, resume your contemplation, and as soon as you have attained the knowledge of my omnipotence, by

\* This was, therefore, a *potentia, non actu*, existence of the world, an ideal creation, and the sum of preformations, from which future being was to be produced; an idea which bears a strong analogy to that which Plato has advanced in his *Timäus*.

† It deserves to be remarked in reference to the lotus, that the seed of all *phænogamous* plants or plants of a higher grade bearing *proper* flowers, contain an *embryo plantlet ready formed*. — G.

means of mortification and abstraction, I will endow you with creative power, and enable you to develop the world from the life which is hidden in my bosom." Obedient to the monition of Bhagavat, Brahma again becomes absorbed in contemplation, and resigns himself to prayer and mortification during the period of a century of years of the gods. At the expiration of this probationary term, Brahma received the promised creative power, and now the second act of the creation began. Brahma first created infinite space; in the next place, he exercised himself upon the principles of things; after that he produced the seven Surges or stellar spheres, illuminated by the resplendent bodies of the Dejotas; and lastly, he ushered the earth Mirtlok, with its sun and moon, and the seven Patals, or lower regions, into existence: the Surges and the Patals constitute the fourteen worlds of the Hindoo cosmogony.

At this stage of the world, animated beings were formed, and among them *spirits* enjoyed a priority of existence. The first in the order of time, was Lomus — the great Muni, who, entirely absorbed in reflection and contemplation, secluded himself in the vicinity of Ajhudja or Audhée, where he tarries till the end of days.\* When the creator Brahma perceived that Lomus was of no use to the world, he made the nine Rischis — inspired beings, among

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\* Audhée is one of the most ancient cities of East Hindostan, and celebrated for its Ssorgadoári, or *temple of heaven*. According to mythic fame, it happened on one occasion that the renowned saint, Shri Rama, bore all the inhabitants of Audhée, together with himself, into heaven!



whom was included Nardman, and illustrious intelligence connected with the three persons of the god-head; but who, notwithstanding this exalted relation, was the author of discórd and rebellion, — a Titan, similar in character to the Ahriman of the Persians or the Prometheus of the Greeks. Like Lomus, the Rischis resigned themselves to an impassive, all absorbing contemplation.

The world having been thus far completed, in order to populate it, Brahma, in conjunction with his wife Sarbutti, brought forth a hundred sons, of whom the oldest — Datch, also begat an equal number; but these generations consisted only either of Dejotas — inhabitants of the Surg's, or celestial space, or of Daints — giants: the denizens of the Patals — the lower spheres or regions, and who could therefore not be employed to people Mirtlok, or the earth. Hence Brahma put forth his creative energy in the production of mankind, and *from his mouth*, he engendered Brahman, a name which is synonymous with the term priest, to whom he gave the four Vedas: the four words or books of his four mouths. Brahman felt very lonely, and besides, he was exceedingly afraid of the wild beasts of the forests; wherefore the creator made from his right arm Raettris the warrior, and from his left arm his wife Shaterany. Unfortunately, Raettris, engaged day and night in the production of his brother Brahman, could not find time to provide for his own wants. From his right thigh Brahma therefore begat the third son Bais, destined to cultivate the soil, and to prosecute commerce and the mechanic arts, while from his left thigh he formed his wife Basany. The labors and

cares of the earth being still too multifarious and severe for the existing progenitors of the race, Brahma proceeded, in the last place, to create from his right foot the fourth son Suder, intended to perform all kinds of servile labor, and from his left foot his wife Suderany: these first begotten human beings were the patriarchs or founders of the four Hindoo castes, by whom the earth was peopled, and who received the four Vedas as the law of human life.

Brahman complaining that he alone, of all his brethren, had no companion, the Eternal bade him not to divert his attention with such thoughts, but to devote himself solely to the study of the Vedas, to prayer, and the observance of divine worship. Nevertheless, the first-born of mankind insisted upon a compliance with his request to have a consort, and therefore, in his wrath, the Eternal gave Brahman a *Daintany*, a daughter of the race of the Daints, or giants, of whom all the Bramins are maternally derived; and thus the entire Hindoo priesthood is descended, on the one hand, from a superior spirit, and on the other, from a demonian woman.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE THEOLOGY OF THE HINDOOS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the Hindoo system of theology has assumed a diversity of forms, according to the degree of information or the plastic skill of authors, a careful investigation of the subject, and a proper at-

tention to the difference between its essential import and its adventitious coloring, has enabled us to arrive at the following facts, which it is presumed may be regarded as a fair specimen of the prominent and peculiar features by which it is ethnologically distinguished: There is one only Supreme Being who, being considered as unrevealed, is denominated Parabrahma, Brehm, Paratma, Ram, or Bhagavat. Revealing himself as Brahma, Birma, or Brahma, the creator, he produces the world through self-contemplation; manifesting himself as Siva, Mahadeva, or Madajo, he destroys it; and appearing under the name and in the character of Vichnu, he reproduces or preserves it. The symbol of Brahma is the earth; of Siva, the fire; and of Vichnu, the water: these principal personifications of Parabrahma, are the three great *Dejotas*, whose mother is said to be Bhavani, and of whose origin mythic fame gives a triple account. "Bhavani," thus proceeds the most commonly received version of the sacred legend, "transported with joy at the thought of having obtained existence, expressed her delight in skips and leaps, and while thus blithely engaged, three eggs fell from her bosom, from which issued the three Dejotas: the Trimurti, or Hindoo trinity." The most holy term in the Hindoo liturgy, denoting the divine trinity in unity, and which no pious Hindoo dares to pronounce, both on account of its inherent sanctity and the profound reverence which he entertains for it, is O'M; which is at once a contraction and a phonetic representation of the letters A, U, M.

It is by this thrice sacred monograph that the three supreme mundane divinities, or highest emanations

of Parabrahma, are designated. The trinity in unity being Parabrahma, the self-existent, and the *undisclosed* and absolutely Supreme Divinity, he is regarded as too exalted for the intercourse of mortals, and accordingly he has neither temples nor worshippers.\* Hence representations like those of the *lingam*, the *yoni*,† etc., can only have been intended to symbolize his distinct energies or manifestations. Parabrahma is, therefore, to be regarded as the One Eternal, who is unity in plurality, or one in all, and who, absolutely considered, has neither parts nor form, being simply an intelligence as well as the organ and object of intelligence; but when contemplated in his cosmical displays or in his relations to the *actual* world, it is natural to recognize him according to his different attributes or divine acts, and equally natural, as it is evident from the whole *ethnic* history of mankind, to represent him under a variety of expressive symbolical devices. He is emphatically the Eternal; the only absolute reality, revealing himself in joy and bliss. As a being he is less than an atom, yet more vast than the universe. In his essence, he is incomprehensible, ineffable, and unrepresentable. The illimitable universe alone can define his name, and portray the image by which he is known. While he

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\* Upon the authority of Doctor Ward, I stated on a former occasion, that Brahma — the personification of the creative attribute of Parabrahma, was “entirely destitute of a temple or worshippers.” It appears, however, from the sequel of this author, that Brahma claims and receives a part of the ritual homage and festive observances common among the Hindoos.

† The male and female symbols of creation.

is independent of the conditions of time and space, all things are included in him : from him they have proceeded, in him they centre. Moreover, he is imperishable in his power as he is in his will ; the soul of the world ; the soul of every individual being. In short, the whole creation is Parabrahma, and as it has emanated from him, so in him it will finally be absorbed. Finally, Parabrahma — absolute existence, is the form of science and of the universe. All worlds are one with the Supreme Being ; for from his will they have originated : this divine will is inherent in all things, and it reveals itself in the creation, the preservation, and the dissolution of the world, as well as in the forms and mutations of time.\*

It may not be uninteresting, and it certainly cannot be unimportant, here to inquire, what was the nature of the Hindoo theology originally, considered in its practical relation, when it had attained its second stage of development, or after synthetic reasoning had resolved polytheism into monotheism ? and what is its present character according to the popular creed ? Originally — using this term in its present acceptation, it was doubtless a plain, concise system, as truthful as it was generally comprehensible. Its professors were not vexed or distracted with subtile, metaphysical definitions. The three prominent ideas of the Deity, as they unfold themselves in the creation, the preservation, and the decay or destruction of the world, were predicates which the

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\* Görres *Mythengeschichte* ; Jones' *Asiatic Researches*, and *Dissertations Relating to Asia* ; Moore's *Hindoo Pantheon* ; Payne Knight, on *Symbolical Language*, etc.



course of nature, and the wonders of the universe everywhere loudly proclaimed, and metaphysic was as little needed to appreciate such truths, as it was to understand the elementary ideas of the religion which the lawgiver Moses was commissioned to promulgate to the Hebrews. The innocent attempt, however, to symbolize, or clothe in the veil of allegory, the attributes and functions of the Deity, and thus to render the Godhead cognizable within the lowest sphere of vulgar vision, gradually led to the vitiation of the faith and worship of the Hindoos. By summoning hieroglyphics to the aid of practical religion, the Hindoo priesthood aimed originally merely to awaken and perpetuate a remembrance of the Deity among mankind; but this laudable design was ultimately overlooked or disregarded, and instead of God, whom it was simply intended to typify or call to mind, the image or mnemonic symbol itself was adored as a divinity: fetichism once more resuming the place of monotheism in the devotion of the plebeian multitude.

Viewed in connection with the foregoing observations, the force and relevancy of the following communication of the bramin Rammohun Roy, must be deemed decisive in an inquiry like the present. According to the "Monthly Magazine" for June, eighteen hundred and seventeen, republished in the same year at Jena, in the German language, the Hindoo priest thus expresses himself upon this interesting subject: "I have noticed that in their writings, many Europeans endeavor to palliate, or deny the existence of idolatry among the Hindoos, striving to convince themselves that all the visible objects of divine wor-



ship among us are regarded by their votaries merely as symbolical representations of the Supreme Being. Were this the case, I should not deem it my duty to enter into a discussion of the question. The truth, however, is, the *present Hindoos* do not thus view the subject, but firmly believe in an infinite number of gods and goddesses, who they suppose enjoy unlimited power in their respective sphere or empire. To propitiate *them*, and *not* the true God, temples are erected, and divine worship is observed. It cannot, however, be doubted, and it is my intention to show, that this practice has originated in the symbolical representations of the attributes and functions of the true God: a truth which is now no longer remembered, and to broach which is denounced by many as a heresy."

Upon the whole, the following quotation from "A View of the Idolatry of the Hindoos," by Doctor Ward, fully coincides with the views laid down in the preceding inquiries: "The Hindoos," says he, — he means of course the better informed among them, — "have some very enlarged views of the divine influence; they believe that it diffuses its vivifying energies over the entire universe; instilling its lifegiving powers into every portion of animated matter. It is related of a learned bramhun — bramin, that on hearing the following lines from Pope's Essay on Man, he started from his seat, begged for a copy of them, and declared that the author must have been a Hindoo. The lines referred to are these: —

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole;  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

This may serve to show the opinions which the Hindoos entertain of the universal energy and operation of the Deity. This energy is said to have created the universe; and therefore this is the object of worship. From the notion of God being the soul of the world; and the world itself being God, under various forms, has arisen the Hindoo practice of paying divine adorations to the heavens collectively;—to the sun, moon, the stars, the sea, great rivers, and all extraordinary appearances in nature. Even the divine energy itself has been personified, as a sort of holy spirit, and worshipped under different names."\*

The disclosure which the intelligent bramin made above upon the present condition of the Hindoo religion, holds equally good in its application to the popular forms of devotion as they manifested themselves among the ancient Egyptians in the time of

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\* It is deemed proper here to reiterate the fact that all the objects of nature referred to in the text, as well as innumerable others, were fetiches in the primitive ages of the world, and constituted universally the first divinities of mankind; and that after the priests had arrived at the knowledge of One God, they made use of some of them as his symbols, or the indices of his attributes and functions, while the great mass of the human race either still continued to maintain its ancient relation towards them, or in case it did ever share the more exalted religious conceptions of the sacerdotal order, it relapsed again into its former fetichism and idolatry. These remarks, therefore, apply with equal force to the Egyptian theology, a notice of which will close the present chapter. — G.

Herodotus. In order to obtain an eligible position from which we shall be able to survey, in an ample field of vision, the remains of a primitive fetichism or the later *iconolatrous* religious creed of two of the most renowned nations of antiquity, as it flourished at one period in the valley of the Nile, or is still practised on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, a synopsis of the Egyptian system of faith is here introduced from the *Pantheon Ægyptiorum* of Jablonski, in the style and with the comments of Doctor Priestley. "According to Jablonski," writes this indefatigable divine, "the knowledge and worship of the Supreme Being was long retained by the Egyptians,\* and they did not think, with the Stoics and others, that he was bound by any blind *fate*, independent of his own will. This supreme intelligence was denominated *Neitha*. The same, or his principal attribute, was also designated by the terms *Phthas*, and *Kneph* — Cnuphis, and in their hieroglyphics he was represented by a serpent. They had also an idea of a chaos of inert matter, out of which the Supreme Being formed all things. The origin of all things was also denominated *Athor*, called by the Greeks the *celestial Venus*. It seems to have been all nature, or the powers of nature, personified.

In a course of time, however, the worship of the Supreme Being was neglected in Egypt, as well as in

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\* That is, after metaphysical induction had at last succeeded in proclaiming to the human mind the existence and providence of the Supreme Being — the God of gods; and not subsequently to a primitive, supernatural revelation, as our authors presume to take for granted. — G.

other parts of the world, and the regards of the people were confined to visible objects, especially the heavenly bodies, as having the most sensible influence on the earth, and on which their well-being more immediately depended; and they worshipped the sun and moon under their proper names; that of the former *Phre*, and that of the latter *Io*. They also paid some worship to the stars, and the five planets. These, together with the sun and moon, were the *seven great gods* of Egypt, and when they are called *eight*, the Supreme Being was included with them. These were the *Cabari*, etc. of the Greeks. It is probable that the erection of obelisks and pyramids, with which Egypt abounded, had some relation to the worship of the sun, as also had the sacred name consisting of *three letters*. These Jablonski supposes to have been *phre* above mentioned. But as the celebrated *triliteral name* among the Hindoos is *oum*,\* and *on* was also at one time the name or title of the sun in Egypt; whence we read of the *priest of On*, and a city of that name, called by the Greeks *Heliopolis*, sacred to him, I rather think that this was the mystical word in Egypt as well as in Hindostan. In time, however, the worship of the stars and planets became confined to the priests, who applied the knowledge they had of them to the purpose of calculating nativities, and other modes of divination.

The next change that the religion of Egypt underwent was in consequence of the speculations of

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\* This word, as we have seen above, is also written *aum*, and contracted phonetically into *o'm*. — G.

the priests, and men of learning, concerning the various positions of the sun and moon with respect to the earth, and the other properties and powers of these great luminaries, and their giving them different names, expressive of these relations and properties. After this, the worship of the sun and moon, by their proper names, gradually ceased, other terms being introduced, and peculiar rites appropriated to each; so that in time they came to be considered as so many different deities; and it is now with difficulty that they can be traced to their origin. This worship of the sun and moon under symbolical names, Jablonski thinks was accomplished in the fourth century after the Exodus, in consequence of a reformation that was made in the Egyptian calendar, which the priests were enabled to do by the attention they had given to the science of astronomy. About that time, in other countries as well as in Egypt, the sun was seldom worshipped under any other names than such as *Osiris*, *Baal*, *Moloch*, *Chemosh*, etc., but the term *Osiris* he supposes to have been known in Egypt some time before the arrival of the Israelites in the country. Under this name the sun was considered as the regulator of time; and as king of the heavens, he was called *Ramphath*. In the winter solstice he was *Serapis*, worshipped under that name at Sinopium near Memphis, and at Racotis near Alexandria. As beginning to emerge from this low state he was *Harpocrates*; when arrived at the vernal equinox he was *Amun*, and under that name was worshipped at Thebes. In the summer solstice he was *Horus*, and considered as in his full strength he was *Semo*, and *Hercules*.



About the same time that the sun was worshipped under the name of Osiris, the moon obtained that of *Isis*; and in time was worshipped in preference to any other deity, because the moon was thought to have more influence on the earth than any other of the heavenly bodies. She was thought more beneficent than the sun, whose excessive heat often dried and burned up the fruits of the earth. Sometimes, however, by the term *Isis* was understood the fruitful part of the land of Egypt, as being made so by the influence of the moon; and sometimes it was synonymous to the earth in general. But the moon, as well as the sun, was worshipped under more names than one. The new moon was the goddess *Bubastis*, and the full moon *Buti*. Considered as continually changing, and often punishing the crimes of men, she was *Tithrambo*, corresponding to the *Hecate* of the Greeks. She was also *Ilythia*, or *Lucina*, particularly invoked in childbearing. *Sothis*, or the dog-star, was peculiarly sacred to *Isis*, as other stars and planets were sacred to other deities who were supposed to direct their influences. The heliacal rising of this star being when the sun was in Cancer, and the rising of the Nile being then first perceptible, this great event was chiefly ascribed to the moon. This was in the month called *Thoth*, the first in the Egyptian year, and thought to be the birthday of the world.\* The worship of the Egyptians was not

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\* The heliacal rising of *Sothis*, or the dog-star, at the summer solstice defined, first, the solar year of three hundred and sixty-five days; and secondly, the great division of time including fourteen hundred and sixty-one years—as has already been men-



confined to the celestial bodies. The river Nile was an object of worship to them at a very early period, being considered as the father and the saviour of the country. Temples were erected to this river, and priests appointed to serve in them, especially at Nilopolis; but in every considerable city there were priests of the Nile, and among other offices it was their business to bury in sacred monuments all persons who were killed by crocodiles, or drowned in the river, thinking there was something divine in them. The Nile was sometimes called the earthly Osiris, and the Bull *Apis* was considered as his symbol, or of the fertility which Egypt derived from it. Before this river entered Egypt it was called *Siris*, which Mr. Bruce says signifies a *dog* in those countries, and thence the name *Sirius*, or the *dog-star*.

Besides the worship of benevolent deities, the Egyptians, like all other heathen nations, paid divine honors to a malevolent one, commonly called *Typhon*; he being considered as the author of almost all evil, and they worshipped him with a view of averting the evils which they thought it was in his power to inflict upon them. To him they once sacrificed men with red hair, he being, they said, of that color: on which account they held it in great abhorrence, but afterwards red oxen. When they

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tioned, called the sothis-period or cycle, and which was the basis or *norma* of the sacerdotal system of chronology. When it is said in the text that the Egyptian year commenced in the month *Thoth*, reference is had to the *civil year*. — G.

did not gain their object by this means, they took some of the animals that were sacred to him into a dark place, where they terrified and beat them; and if that did not answer, they killed them outright."

## SECTION III.

### THE RELIGIOUS CREED OF THE SCANDINAVIANS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE SCANDINAVIAN DEITIES.

###### *Prologue.*

WHETHER Odin or Thor, the former of whom responding also to the names of Woden and Wodan, is entitled to preëminence of rank in the Scandinavian pantheon, is a question which has not heretofore been clearly determined. While the opponents of Thor concede to his friends that it is common to find in the popular creed of the mythologies of antiquity, that the god of thunder — as Thor or Jupiter, is represented as the chief of the celestial powers, and that he may therefore, as it is contended by his advocates, have been the *supreme god* of the Teutonic race, during its residence in Asia, they insist that it is a well-ascertained fact that in the more recent or historical times, all the tribes of these people regarded Odin as the father of the gods; and that in

the Eddaic Poems, he is invariably portrayed in this exalted capacity. Let us therefore proceed briefly to investigate the claims of the respective parties. Adam of Bremen mentions the statues of the divine triad, Odin, Thor, and Frey, placed one above the other in the temple of Upsal, in the same order in which their prototypes are here enumerated. This priority of position evidently implies a superiority of Odin over Thor. According to another version of the same subject, the images of the Teutonic trinity were placed in such a relation to each other, that Thor occupied the middle, Odin the right, and Frey the left side of him; a grouping which seems to attach the most weight to Thor.

The most solemn judicial oath among the Scandinavians, administered within the sacred *altar-ring*, was taken in the name of Frey, Njörd, and the *Almighty God*. By the latter designation, the Icelanders and the Norwegians understood Thor, the Swedes and the Danes, Odin. Here, again, is a parity of patronage and an equality of rank. I will only add that the titles which appropriately distinguished the persons in the trinity, were the High, the equally High, and the Third. Odin is, however, called the *Alfadir* — the father of all, or the Supreme God in the strict metaphysical acceptance of the term, as it is affirmed by some; while others, and among these the distinguished Norse scholar, Finn Magnusen, maintain that this comprehensive epithet is only popularly, and as it were by a hyperbolical concession, applied to Odin, whom they consider as a principal mundane divinity, but altogether different from the absolutely supreme and supermundane deity. From the cosmogony of the

Scandinavians, it is evident that Odin is a creature, and not even the first in the scale of sentient, organic existence. Genealogy traces his descent to Bör and Besla, and he is therefore the mixed offspring of an illustrious sire and a corrupt mother. A truth, which must forever annihilate Odin's pretensions to the rank of an absolutely supreme godhead. Prior to his existence, there was a God *in statu abscondito*, who sent the warm air into the chaotic abyss called Ginnunga-gap, and this incident was the first display of a plastic energy in creation. According to Mone, every thing in Ginnunga-gap,—the foetal vase of the world, the gods, and the giants, and whatever proceeds from them, is subject to the change and dissolution consequent upon the existing dualism in the universe. Only *the being* who dwells beyond the limits of the world, and who impelled the dissolving heat from Muspellheim into Ginnunga-gap, is without mutation and eternal. The gods who descended on the maternal side, from giants, are in a state of perpetual warfare with this branch of their kindred; that is, mind and matter are involved in a ceaseless conflict; and the mortality of the gods is necessarily predicated upon their organic connection with material existence. This death or mortality is, however, not an extinction but an evolution of being, and a repetition of it is gain,—the *plus* in the problem of being.

In his "Critical Examination of the Leading Doctrines of the Scandinavian System," Blackwell thus concludes his remarks upon this subject: "We should be inclined to *conjecture* that the Scandinavian cosmogonists may have regarded Odin as a real

mundane deity. The problem which they had to solve, was the origin of the universe. They might have had recourse to the more pleasing, and at the same time far more rational system that presupposes a Supreme Essence — a spirit moving upon the face of the waters — whereas the one they adopted only recognizes matter which becomes at length sufficiently organized to produce Odin, Vili, and Ve.\* They may possibly have applied these names to designate three modes of action of one deity, — Odin, or All-Father; but whether they regarded him as a corporeal being, or as the *anima mundi* — the intelligent and co-ordinate principle of the universe — we think they ascribed to this being or this intelligence, the further work of creation typified by the slaughter of Ymir, and the formation of the earth and the heavens from his body, as it lay extended in Ginnunga-gap." †

After a fair investigation of the subject under consideration, it must be admitted that Odin is undoubtedly the chief mundane god among the Scandinavians, and that in war especially, he towered far above the rest of his compeers: he was emphatically the Mars among the sons of *Teut*. ‡ It cannot be denied also,

\* Was not the thaw-wind blowing from Muspellheim at the bidding of the unseen God, an *animus*, a breath, a spirit brooding over the waters of Ginnunga-gap? As will be seen hereafter, no fact in Scandinavian cosmogony is more clearly established than this. — G.

† Not to Odin alone but to him and his two brothers Vili and Ve, is the creation of the world ascribed, as we shall have occasion to show in our chapter on Scandinavian cosmogony. — G.

‡ *Teut*, or *Tuisco*, is the hypothetical founder of the Teutonic race, or one of their oldest gods, whose name distinguished his



that the traditions, the life, and the religion of the Scandinavians, as well as of the Germanic branch of the Teutonic race, mainly centres in Odin. And Odinism and Scandinavinism are, in many respects, synonymous terms.

The Scandinavian mythology, like the people whose name it bears, has its sturdy root in the plains of upper Asia. It was from this region that a part of the Teutonic people, under the leadership of Odin the *hero*, immigrated into Europe in the age preceding the birth of Christ. And there can be little doubt that it is a vigorous branch of the prolific Hindoo-Persian stem. The deities who figure in its ample

votaries. Among the five or six Teutonic deities who have conferred their names upon the days of the week, Teut, or Tuisco, claims to be one, and to him, according to Walz, Tuesday — in German Dienstag, is sacred. "Dienstag," says he, "which in the old German was written Dingstag, derives its name from Tuisco, whom the ancient Germans worshipped as the god of Justice. From *Tuiscotag*, were formed *Tuistag* and *Tistag*." At last *Din-stag*, or *Dingstag*, gave nominal distinction to this day. The root of this term in the old Norse, as we learn from M. Mallet, is *thinga*, which in process of time was changed into *thing*: it was used as an appellative denoting a deliberative or judicial assembly, composed of all the free citizens of the nation, and called *Al-thing*. The *Al-thing* was held annually in summer, and lasted sixteen days. Our French authority upon this subject, already noticed, ignoring Tuisco, derives not only the English, but every other Teutonic appellation by which this day is distinguished, from *Tyr*, a warrior deity, and the protector of champions and brave men. "From *Tyr*," says he, in the language of his translator, Bishop Percy, "is derived the name given to the third day of the week, in most of the Teutonic languages, and which has been rendered in Latin by *Dies Martis*. Old Norse, *Tirsdagr*, *Tisdagr*; Swedish, *Tisdag*; Danish, *Tirsdag*; German, *Dienstag*; Dutch, *Ding-*

creed, are the personifications of the elementary constituents, combinations, and operations of the universe ; or in other words, of the laws and manifestation of physical nature : they are, however, especially represented as the controllers of the astronomical year ; as the governors of the world ; and as the administrators of human affairs.

The Norse names of the Scandinavian deities, are *A's*, god, *A'esir*, gods, *A'synja*, goddess, *A'synjor*, goddesses. A concise outline of the character and functions of some of these frigid divinities, is all that will be attempted or that can be reasonably expected in this place. Of Odin little is necessary to be said,

stag ; Anglo-Saxon, *Tyrsdaeg*, *Tyvesdaeg*, *Tivesdaeg* ; English, Tuesday." The fourth day of the week was honored with the name of the principal mundane divinity of the *Teutones*, known as Odin, Woden, or Wodan, and designated, writes Walz, *Wodantag* or *Wonstag*, being still denominated *Vodenstag* by the Danes. The etymological deduction of the name of this day, is thus stated by M. Mallet : " Old Norse, *Odinsdagr* ; Swedish and Danish, *Onsdag* ; Anglo-Saxon, *Wodenesdaeg*, *Wodnesdaeg* ; English, Wednesday ; Dutch, *Woensdag*." " The fifth day of the week," he adds, " was consecrated to Thor. Old Norse, *Thorsdagr* ; Swedish and Danish, *Torsdag* ; Anglo-Saxon, *Thuresdaeg*, *Thursdaeg* ; English, Thursday ; German, *Donnerstag* ; Dutch, *Donderdag* — the Thunderer's day." Of Friday, or Freyja's day, sacred to the Venus of the Teutonic people, he thus disposes : " Old Norse, *Freydagr*, *Friadagr* ; Swedish and Danish, *Fredag* ; Anglo-Saxon, *Frigedaeg* ; Dutch, *Vrijdag* ; German, *Freytag*." As to Saturday, or the old German *Satertag*, it is so named from Saturn or Sater — Surtur, properly written *Surtr*, the god of time, or Chronos : ay, the Supreme Being himself, among the Greeks, the Teutonic race, etc. — G.

as the reader must be already tolerably familiar with his celestial majesty. Not only does he respond to the name Alfadir, but to that of Valfadir — *Wahl-Vater* ; for he *chooses* for his sons all those who bravely fall in battle. It is for their especial benefit that he has prepared Valhalla and Vingólf, where they are distinguished by the title of *Einherjar* — select heroes. The insignia of this warlike god, the Mars *par excellence* of the Teutonic people, are a golden casque, a resplendent cuirass, and a most formidable scimitar.

In his highest planetary power and effulgence, Odin is recognized as the *sun-god* — the primary impersonation of the zodiacal cycle. Frigga, the queen of the Norse pantheon, a fair and graceful goddess, is the wife of Alfadir, and the same as the goddess Hertha — the earth, among the ancient Germans. She has the faculty of foreseeing the destinies of mankind, but the caution never to reveal them. In this rare vaticinal gift, she is said to have stood unrivalled among the Scandinavian divinities.

Thor is a son of Odin, and like the rest of the Norse deities, he is exemplary in his obedience towards the common father of the Aesir race. He is decidedly regarded as the most powerful of his compeers. Thrudheim — the realm of strength, is his celestial abode. He is emphatically the Hercules among these northern deities, and continually engaged in combating giants and other typified principles of evil. The god of thunder appears painted on a car drawn by two rams or he-goats, whose heads are incased in silver bridles, while his own awful brow is encircled with a wreath of stars. A team is

of the highest importance to him; for he travels almost incessantly, upon the electric wheels of the hissing, rumbling thunderclouds! His usual emblems are a crown upon his head, a sceptre in one hand, and a mallet in the other. His mallet, a veritable thunderbolt, he is in the habit of hurling into the air against the rebellious frost and mountain-giants; and many have been the fractured skulls which this mischievous race has had occasion to deplore.

Ovid thus graphically delineates the manner in which the giants were accustomed to wage war against heaven, and the terrible expedient which Jupiter, the Thor of Scandinavia, invariably adopted to demolish their proud bulwarks, and hurl the insolent foe to the earth:—

“Nor were the gods themselves more safe above,\*  
Against beleaguer'd heaven the giants move,  
Hills piled on hills, on mountains mountains lie,  
To make their mad approaches to the sky;  
Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time  
To avenge with thunder their audacious crime.  
Red lightning play'd along the firmament,  
And their demolish'd works to pieces rent.  
Singed with the flames, and with the bolts transfix'd,  
With native earth their blood the monsters mix'd.  
The blood, endued with animating heat,  
Did, in the impregnate earth, new sons beget.  
They, like the seed from which they sprung, accursed,  
Against the gods immortal hatred nursed;  
An impious, arrogant, and cruel brood,  
Expressing their original from blood.”

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\* This line of the poet alludes to the iron age of the world, when vice in its multiform shapes, represented as so many giants, not content to have banished virtue from the earth, aimed also to pollute heaven with its unhallowed touch. — G.

Whenever Thor wishes to grasp the handle of his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt or electric mallet, he is obliged to put on his iron gauntlets. He also wears a magical belt, known as the *belt of strength*, and whenever he girds it about his divine person, his celestial power is doubly augmented.

Baldur\* is the mildest, the wisest, and the most eloquent of all the Aésir; and such too is the unswerving rectitude of his character, that his decision is never reversed, or its legality even suspected. He likewise is Odin's son, and universally esteemed in the creed of the Scandinavians as the preëminently *good god*. Such is the extraordinary lustre of his person and features, that a halo of the most dazzling glory radiates from them. His hair is white as the virgin snow. This benignant and holy being lives in *Breidablik*—the region of ample vision. As the highest type of spiritual perfection and ethical excellence which can distinguish a mundane divinity, Baldur is the personification of all that is morally great and good, and therefore the converse of Loki—the satan in the Norse system of faith, who always hates him with the force and intensity of an inveterate malice, and never ceases to persecute and annoy him till at last he succeeds to accomplish his destruction: sin prevails over holiness, and now the death of the gods and the dissolution of the world, are rap-

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\* The proper orthography of Baldur, also written Balldr, is Baldr or Balldr; but as the English Grammar recognizes no similar syllabical law, I have followed the example of other authors and written the Norse words which end thus, either by introducing a vowel into the final syllable, or by rejecting the final consonant.



idly approaching. Ay, the gods too, to divest themselves of the gross material elements with which their natures are allied, must die; but their death is an evolution from a less to a more perfect state of existence. Man likewise needs purgation and further development; and even the material world is susceptible of improvement, and destined to experience renovation. Death is life in embryo. Baldur's body is burned, — the prelude and emblem of the conflagration of the world, and his ashes are committed to a watery grave in the sea: he returns again to his origin, and the origin of all creation — the *dropping waters* in Ginnunga-gap, warmed and fructified by the breath of the Almighty! Baldur the immaculate — the saviour, goes to *Hel*,\* the abode of the dead: he has fallen a victim to the temporarily omnipotent power of evil.

Nanna grieves to such a degree at the untimely fate of her beloved Baldur, that she too dies and follows her husband into the spirit-world. Baldur gives his gold ring, Draupner, to Hermod, who has come, but failed to procure his liberation from Hel, to present it as a keepsake to Odin. Nanna also sends Frigga a necklace, beside other costly gifts, and to Fulla a gold finger-ring; the pledges and symbols of a *palingenesia* and perpetuity of the nobler elements, and diviner forms of the lower and upper world; for both are inclosed in the *Worroltring* — the world-

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\* *Hel*, in the Scandinavian mythology, is synonymous with the *hell*, or Hades — the lower regions of other creeds, with the important exception, however, that it does not imply either a place or a state of punishment.



ring, which He that sent the Muspell-breeze into Ginnunga-gap, assigned as the ample but unalterably fixed limit of the duration of the universe.

The myth continues to inform us that some of the gods, as Baldur, Vidar, Vali, etc., shall survive this wreck of time, and *crash of worlds*; that a new earth all verdant and lovely, with delightful fields where the grain will grow in spontaneous profusion, shall emerge from the sea; and that a man named Lif-thrasir — the longlived, and a woman known as Lif — life, lying concealed during the conflagration, in Hodmimir's forest, and subsisting upon the dew of the morning, shall replenish the rejuvenated world with their offspring. Njörd dwells in the heavenly mansion Noátún. He is the Neptune of the Scandinavians; has dominion over the winds; checks the fury of the sea and of the fire; and is worshipped with peculiar ardor by seafarers and fishermen. His lineage is not that of the Aesir generally; for he was born and bred in Vanaheim — the abode of the *Vanir*: the personifications of mind and spirituality. The Vanir gave him as a hostage to the Aesir, receiving from them Hœnir in his stead. By this means peace was restored between them and the gods. Njörd is, therefore, to be regarded as the mediator between a mixed and pure spirituality. The name of his heroic wife is Skadi, the daughter of Thjassi the giant. The rocky regions of Thrymheim, mark the locality of her residence. She is decidedly the Minerva of the Norse pantheon. Fastening on her snow-skades and taking her bow, she pleasantly passes her time in the chase of savage beasts, and is

hence called Ondurdis — snow-skates ! She is the feminine impersonation of virtue combating vice.

Frey and Freyja claim to be the children of Njörd. They are celebrated for their power and beauty, and Frey can justly boast to be one of the most renowned of the gods. Rain and sunshine, as well as all the fruits of the earth, are under his august supervision ; and in order to secure the blessings of riches, peace, and an abundant harvest, his name is ever devoutly to be invoked. The hermaphrodite formation of this divinity, is to typify productiveness.

On some occasions of state, Frey rides out in a car drawn by a boar, named Gullinbursti : a safe way of travelling probably, but an awkward and slow one we are inclined to think ! Freyja — the *Frau*, his lovely sister, is the Venus, or goddess of love, among the Teutonic people, and the most propitious of all their female divinities. Her habitation in heaven is denominated Folkváng, which literally signifies the folk's mead, or dwelling, and which contains a hall called Sessrymnir — the room of many seats, which is appropriated to a moiety of all who die in battle ; for to whatever field of battle the goddess rides, she boldly asserts her right to one half of the slain, while she cheerfully resigns the other half to Odin as his just share. The charming Freyja is in the habit of sallying forth from her celestial abode in a carriage, moving after the soft and noiseless tread of a team of cats.

The learned Icelfander, Finn Magnusen, regards Frey and Freyja as the personifications of the sun and moon, and in our opinion justly so. Tyr, the most daring and intrepid of all the gods, next demands our notice.

It is he who dispenses valor in war, and hence warriors devoutly invoke his celestial aid. Though his wisdom deservedly ranks high, his bravery is pre-eminent; and a man who excels others in strength and puissant feats, is distinguished by the title of *Tyr — strong*.

Bragi's wisdom and eloquence confer upon him an enviable distinction among the gods. In poetry he is universally admitted to be unrivalled, and he may therefore be set down as the poet-laureate at the court of the Scandinavian divinities. Bragr is accordingly the Norse name of the poetic art. To brag is derived from the root *braga*, to glisten, to shine, or from *bragga*, to adorn, and a *braggart* is, I regret to say it, a poet! The name of Bragi's consort is Iduna or Ithun. To her keeping are intrusted the golden apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste to become young again. Iduna's apples, we may remark, typify the ripe, mellow fruit, generated in the season of summer. As long as the gods, — physical nature personified, subsist upon this food: the reward and the evidence of their agrarian activity, they live. The fruit of one year is the seed of another, and hence the more the gods eat, the more abundant will be the crops. The betrayal of Iduna with her aureal fruit into the power of Thiassi, a notorious frost-giant, through the atrocious treachery of Loki, is emblematical of winter and its sterility.

Heimdall *the white god*, resides in Himinbjörg, — heaven-mountains, at the termination of Bifröst, the aerial or rainbow bridge. He is the warder of the gods, and is therefore placed on the confines of heaven,

to prevent the hostile giants from forcing a passage over the bridge : he is, in short, the valiant defender of mind against matter, and of organized life against inorganic existence. His important vocation demands his presence everywhere in his vast empire, and to facilitate his progress from place to place, he makes use of his famous steed Gulltopp—the golden-maned.

Forseti, the son of Baldur and Nanna, the daughter of Nef, occupies the celestial mansion Glitnir. By the tenure of his office, he is the constitutional arbitrator of all questions of law, and all litigants who submit their cases to his decision, go away perfectly satisfied with their treatment, and fully reconciled to each other. Indeed, they have no reason to find fault; for his judgment is invariably founded upon the nature of things or the conditions of being, and by it every one must necessarily abide.

Ullur, the step-son of Thor, is not only a skilful archer, but as an accomplished skater on the bleak fields of frozen snow between the Baltic and the Arctic ocean, he is declared to be unequalled. While in personal appearance he is admitted by all to be exceedingly prepossessing, his merits as a warrior are undisputed.

As to Vidar, notwithstanding the thick clumsy shoes which he wears, and his proverbially taciturn disposition, he is a god in whom his compeers place the utmost reliance in critical conjunctures; for, in wonderful prowess and courage, he is almost equal to the potent, daring Thor himself.

Of Vali, who is represented as the son of Odin

and Rinda — the crust of the earth, though according to the cosmogony of the Scandinavians, he is the brother of the Alfadir, we need only state that he is favorably known on account of his martial qualities, and that he is the worthy symbol of the nobler struggles of good against evil.

Though the number of the Scandinavian divinities or deistic personifications, compared with that of some other ancient nations, is exceedingly small, it deserves to be remarked that the preceding enumeration of them comprises only about one half of the celestial nomenclature. Some, whose importance or mythic connection may especially claim our attention hereafter, will be introduced to the notice of the reader, though it is to be presumed that by a careful attention to the foregoing delineations, he must be already pretty well acquainted with the character and history of this interesting and ingenuous family of deities.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCANDINAVIAN GODS IN THEIR PLANETARY RELATION TO MANKIND.

THE abodes or mansions of the gods, noticed in the previous chapter, are, in the opinion of some learned Norse scholars, the zodiacal signs in the ecliptic, and hence they suppose the Scandinavian mythology to be founded upon astronomy, and that its



gods are planetary gods, in which capacity they are to be especially viewed in their relation to the three leading planets in our system, the earth, the sun, and the moon, whose influence upon human affairs is most decidedly felt, and universally acknowledged. Contemplated in this light, we proceed to an elucidation of the subject.

Thor, the opener of the year, begins his reign at the period of the vernal equinox, in the sign of Aries; and as such he is symbolical of time and terrestrial fecundity. Next comes Ullur in Taurus, when the earth begins to develop its latent energies, and gives promise of future plenty; and therefore the horn of taurus, or the ox, is typical of agrarian abundance: it is the *horn of plenty*, so frequently quoted in the ornate effusions of poets and orators. Frey, the floral god, who is at once the lovely and the loving, takes his turn in Gemini, and is now in the bloom and vigor of his strength, of which his sword is the emblem. June, or Cancer, claims the presence of Odin, and the sun-god is now in the culmination of his divine might: his creative and maturing planetary influence is complete. At this point of the ecliptic the sun begins its recession from the northern hemisphere, — Odin dies; retires to his hall Valhalla, in July; and in August, he already occupies Gladshheim — glad-home, or the abode of bliss, as the father of souls. Skadi succeeds in Libra, or September; and Baldur, the good, takes his station in Scorpion, or October, after the autumnal equinox. As to Heimdall, the preserver of the planetary world, he demands Sagittarius, or November, for his portion of zodiacal sway; while Freyja, the *delight*, is con-



tent with December, or Capricorn. Forseti takes possession of Aquarius, or January ; Njörd of Pisces, or February ; and Vidar, without any definite abode, closes the cycle of the year, of the quiet, silent departure of which he is the type. Hence he is called the silent god.

According to another planetary arrangement of the year, and of the gods, Ullur commences the zodiacal revolution in Sagittarius, and is successively followed by Frey, Vali, Saga, Odin, Skadi, Baldur, Heimdall, Freyja, Forseti, Njörd, and Vidar. Which of these systems approaches nearest to the truth, I am unable to determine: both may have prevailed at different periods of the world ; but this I know, that the year among the northern nations of Europe was computed from one winter solstice to another, as the month was from one new moon to the next. They accordingly called the night, at the winter solstice, the *mother-night*, as that which produced all the rest ; as, in short, the birth of time !

The care which the gods exercised over the souls and bodies of mankind in the different stages of their present existence, corresponds to the attention which they paid to the government of the solar year in its various phases, and may be microcosmically thus expressed, in reference to the body: Freyja is the birth, Forseti the nurse or guardian, Njörd the nourishment, Thor the vigor, Ullur the growth, Frey the pubescent period, Odin the procreation and death.\*

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\* The philosophy of the Teutonic people taught them that generation is not only life but death — in embryo, and to this proposition the science of biology of the nineteenth century, must bow assent.

In relation to the soul, Saga is the nurse, Odin, in his character of Alfadir, the food, Skadi the strength, Baldur the development, Heimdall the consummation, when it is ripe for an entrance into a higher sphere of being. This ripeness of the soul for a change, expresses itself in a longing after greater perfection; and hence Heimdall, who inhabits Himinbjörg — the heaven-mountains, and who is both the watchman of heaven and the soul of the world, is also the conductor of the souls into celestial bliss, and the final realization of their ardent and irrepresible desires after a happier and more exalted state of existence.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SCANDINAVIAN COSMOGONY.

IN the dayspring of ages, or the beginning of time, according to the mytho-cosmogonic poem, entitled the Völuspa — the song of the prophetess, the primeval state of material creation, was a vast, void abyss, called Ginnunga-gap: *the cup or gulf of delusion*; thus denominated agreeably to the macrocosmic creed of the Teutonic people, who taught that generation is a union of the two antitheses of light and darkness, or fire and water, whose resultant, or offspring, is a delusion or death under the semblance of life. It is, too, the magical link between the north and the south poles of creation. Into this capacious cup — light, as imponderable ether, flowed from the south,

or at least from a torrid region, the envenomed streams of Elivâgar — the dropping waters, and the further they receded from their source, the more the venom in them — the heat, considered as the antagonism of cold, became reduced in its temperature, and at last the fluid mass congealed in Ginnunga-gap.\* The northern, nebulous, and dark region of this inane matrix of a rising world, is Nebelheim, or Mist-home, commonly known as Nilfheim — a dismal place of ice and night and mist: the genesis of the world. There is located Hvergelmir, or the spring of hot water, from which issue twelve rivers. The southern tract of the abyss was illuminated by the glowing rays emanating from the sphere or abode of light, designated Muspellheim, the place in which headed the waters of Elivâgar. From this torrid zone of the infant universe, blew a scorching wind, which dissolved the frozen waters of the Elivâgar: † they distilled in living drops, and *he* that sent the hot

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\* The venom which they rolled along hardened, as does dross that runs from a furnace, and became ice: a sufficient quantity of heat was abstracted to convert the water into a gelid mass. When the rivers flowed no longer, the venom gathered over it — the ice: the heat escaping from the freezing waters, froze to rime, and in this manner were formed in Ginnunga-gap many layers of congealed vapor, piled one over the other. Such being the condition of the northern part of the abyss, whilst everywhere within were whirlwinds and fleeting mists, and the southern portion of it was luminous with the sparks and scintillations that were wafted into it from Muspellheim. — Northern Antiquities.

† In the following lines, translated by Dryden, Ovid gives an analogous picture of nascent creation: —

“Heat and cold were in one body fix’d,  
And soft with hard, and light with heavy, mix’d.”

wind, created out of them the giant Ymir, in the likeness of man : \* a fact which represents heat, in its various modifications, as the active, and cold, in its different phases, as the passive, principle of generation. Simultaneously with Ymir, and in the same manner, the cow Audhumla — the symbol of the nobler parts of matter, and hence the antithesis of the giant, is called into existence. From her capacious udder flowed four streams of milk, which constituted the luscious and healthful nourishment of Ymir. By licking the stones that were covered with salt and hoar-frost, she succeeded, in the space of three days, in producing a superior being, called Bur or Buri, in the similitude of man ; fair proportioned, beautiful, and strong. It now happened that Ymir fell asleep and sweated profusely — the sweat appears to have been blood ; the result was that from the pit of his left arm was born a man and a woman, while one of his feet engendered with the other a son.

From this marvellous progeny sprang the race of frost-giants — Hrimthursen ; a race evil and depraved

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\* The being who put forth this creative energy must of course be God, or the metaphysically Supreme Being in *statu abscondito*. Is he the same as Surtur, who sits upon the borders of the luminous and glowing regions of Muspellheim, to guard it ? “ In his hand ” — Surtur’s, we are told in the Northern Antiquities, “ he beareth a flaming falchion, and at the end of the world, he shall come forth to combat, and shall vanquish all the gods, and consume the universe with fire.” To me it seems evident that the invisible God, or God in *statu abscondito*, who sent the genial heat into Ginnunga-gap from Muspellheim, and created Ymir, etc., is the God of gods, or Surtur, who will survive when the gods and the world shall be no more !

like Ymir their sire. After this, Buri's son, Bör married a Joten, or giant-woman, whose name was Besla, the daughter of Bölthorn, and the illustrious fruit of this union, were the three gods Odin, Vili, and Ve.\* The following tragic incident clearly shows that up to this period, the displays of creative power are to be regarded as mere preludes to the formation of the universe; Ymir and the sons of Bör scarcely possessed a trait of character in common, and their uncongenial tempers naturally made them inimical towards each other. What might reasonably be expected under such inauspicious circumstances, soon happened, and the latter fell upon the unfortunate giant and slew him; and such were the copious discharges of blood from his wounds, that the whole race of ice and frost-giants was drowned in its floods, except Bergelmir, who, with his wife, saved himself in a bark, and was thus permitted to transmit the younger branch of the giant-race. The time has now arrived when the world is to be fairly ushered into existence, and the three divine sons of Bör, dragging the murdered remains of their victim into the midst of Ginnunga-gap, begin the stupendous task of its creation. Of the flesh of Ymir, they

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\* Ymir, or the mundane body, is a hermaphrodite, and the emblem of rude, undivided matter: organic food sustains. Audhumla—also written Audhumbla, is the primeval realization of a distinct gender in the individual, and the impersonation of the idea of mother of all things, both of the world and of the gods. The salt which she licked from the stones, is the mineral which was universally regarded by the Teutonic people as the motive and formative principle in organic creation; and among them, was literally *the salt of the earth!*



made the earth; of his blood, the ocean and the rivers; of his huge bones, the mountains; of his teeth, his jaw-bones, and the splinters of some of his broken bones, the rocks and the cliffs; of his hair, the trees; of his brain, the clouds; and of his eyebrows, Midgard — the abode of man. Besides, of his ample skull, they constructed the vault of heaven, and poised it upon the four remotest pillars of the earth, placing under each pillar a dwarf, the name of each respectively corresponding to one of the cardinal points of the horizon. The sparks and cinders which were wafted into the abyss from the tropical region of Muspellheim, they fixed in the centre of the celestial concave, above and below Ginnunga-gap, to supply it and the earth with light and heat.

At this stage of creation the important science of chronology was introduced, and days and years began to be distinguished and numbered. The world being now in a suitable condition for the habitation of man, the progenitors of our race, according to the *Völuspa*, were created in the following manner: Three mighty and beneficent Aesir, leaving the assembly of the gods, took a walk to the sea-strand, and there found two trees, or as some assert, *two sticks*, floating upon the water, powerless and without destiny. Odin gave them breath and life; Hönir, souls and motion; and Lodur, speech, beauty, sight, and hearing.\* They then called the man *Askr* —

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\* In their account of this interesting and wonderful performance, the Northern Antiquities vary a little from the text. From them, it appears that the creators of the first human pair, are all sons of Bør; that the oldest of them — Odin, conferred upon the man and



the ash, and the woman, *Embla* — the alder, in allusion to their dendronic origin; and these were the individuals from whom have sprung mankind, destined to reside in Midgard — mid-garden, mid-girth, mid-sphere: the habitable globe. It may be observed here, that the component parts of man correspond to matter, mind, and organic life, and that the first has its type or analogue in the Joten, or giants; the second, in the Vanir, or pure spirits — the Wanen; and the last, in the Aesir, or gods — beings intermediate between both.\* Midgard, or the abode of man, already adverted to, yet briefly claims our attention. According to Eddaic lore, it is necessary in order to form a correct idea of the topography of Midgard, to conceive the earth to be as round as a *ring*, or as a disk in the midst of the ocean, encircled by Jörmungand, the great Midgard-serpent, holding its tail in its mouth, the outer shores of the ocean forming the mountainous regions of Jötunheim — giant-home, assigned in *fee-simple* to the perverse

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woman life and souls; the second — Vili, motion and knowledge; and the third — Ve, the gifts mentioned above, with the addition of raiment.

\* All creation, even the gods not excepted, being made of Ymir the mortal, and mundane body, is liable to dissolution. Death originates birth or being — as is exemplified by the dead body of Ymir, and birth, death; and death is therefore — delightful thought! the pledge of life; the transition-state of existence. Death inflicted upon Ymir, is the unhappy cause of perpetual enmity between the sons of Bör and the giants: the symbol of the dualism in creation — rude matter and organic being, and mind and sensuousness. Only the *Vanir* — the impersonations of mind and ideality, are indestructible as the pure spirit-emanations of the Eternal.

Ymir race by the generous sons of Bör. In the centre of this terrestrial ring or disk, these indefatigable divinities erected a citadel from the eyebrows of Ymir, against the inroads of their belligerent frontier neighbors; and this is Midgard, the work of gods and the home of man. It is, therefore, the duty of the latter to defend and cherish it against all the boreal powers of evil, — the storms and hail, the ice and snow, as well as the gigantic mountains, which raise their threatening peaks in stern defiance above the clouds: in short, to keep watch and ward over it despite of every adverse physical influence. These latter are giants of the lofty alpine species, and hence we arrive at the origin of the *elves*, and the *alp*, or nightmare. In the German, the phrase *Alpen-Druck* still commemorates the myth of the *elves* of *darkness*. The clouds which float in the circumambient air above Midgard, are, as has been stated, the spongy productions of Ymir's brain, flung into space. They loom up from the borderland of Ymir's race, and are variable and deceitful, like the source from which they are derived. Their dark hue and tempestuous character are emblematical of the gloomy thoughts and violent passions of Ymir. They borrow their brilliant tints from the luminaries of heaven, but their beauty is delusive; and there is continual strife between them and these bodies, — the resplendent and benign emanations of empyrean Muspellheim. Who can doubt, that the rigorous and dreary winter of Scandinavia is admirably calculated to furnish abundant materials for such fanciful and dismal reflections, and

that the families of Boreus and Ymir are allied by ties of a close affinity?

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ASGARD AND THE GOLDEN AGE.

THE sons of Bor—according to Mone, *the gods* without distinction of rank or number—instead of reposing upon their well-earned demiurgic laurels, continued to display their celestial skill in the construction of an abode—a city or castle, for their own use, in the centre of the universe, which they denominated Asgard—the abode of the gods. From this exalted habitation, the assiduous gods were in the habit of going forth to perform their manifold and arduous duties, both on earth and in heaven. With the tremulous and oscillating bridge, by them called Bifrost, but by man the rainbow, they connected the terrestrial and supernal worlds. This most ingenious and superb structure formed the thoroughfare of the gods, while its red stripe, radiating flames of fire, effectually prevented the frost and mountain-giants from ascending to heaven. In the midst of Asgard was the place known as Idavollr—the pleasant field, where the gods convened and built a palace for their private convenience, with twelve thrones—the largest and most magnificent edifice in the world, composed within and without of massive gold, and by mortals denominated

Gladshheim; that is, the home of gladness or bliss. The other palace which exercised their artistic ingenuity and attested their disinterested benevolence, was intended for the use of the fair goddesses, and upon it men have conferred the name of Vingolf—the abode of friends. Odin, as the supreme mundane divinity, had his lofty throne in that part of Asgard, recognized as Hlidskjalf, from which he surveyed and perfectly understood all that transpired within the ample limits of the universe. At this epoch of their history, the untiring divinities began to rear furnaces, forge hammers, tongs, and anvils, and to engage in the manufacture of various kinds of metallic and other wares. Gold they possessed in so prodigious a quantity, that all the celestial furniture of that period was made of this precious ore; and hence it was emphatically distinguished as *the golden age*. In the Scandinavian creed, coinciding at least in this respect with the existing faith of the Jew and the Christian, the rainbow was symbolical of the world's safety. When the black giants, the thunderclouds, threatened to take heaven by storm, and the flashing, pealing electric bolts had scattered and hurled them to the earth, it was displayed in all its dazzling prismatic splendor, to the anxious or the admiring gaze of mortals, as the signal of victory on the part of the Aesir over the Ymir offspring; as the pledge of the supremacy of the good over the evil; and as the sure promise of the perpetuity of the universe. Not only, we may further remark, did the gods descend to the earth upon this grand

iridescent *suspension bridge*, in order to sojourn and labor among mankind, but upon it, as rays once darted from the fountain of light, but now reflected and reabsorbed, the disembodied souls of the latter returned to their celestial home. Among the Greeks and Romans it belonged to the functions of the goddess Iris — the messenger of Juno, to unloose the souls of expiring women from the chains of the body, as Mercury unloosed those of the other sex. In the execution of this important trust, she, too, travelled upon the resplendent paths of Bifrost, as Ovid says:

“On the same *bow* she went she soon returns.”—*Tooke*.

Asgard, the Zion of the Scandinavian divinities, seems to be synonymous with the zodiac; the twelve thrones of the gods denoting that number of signs in the ecliptic: the solitary, towering one occupied by Odin, implying planetary unity. Believing that the gods are not only all-powerful, but also infinitely beneficent beings, what is more natural and proper than that man should feel it to be a pleasure, as well as deem it to be his duty and his interest, to imitate them as far as lies in his power? Accordingly, the gods assembling together in their mansions or temples on high, and their assemblies necessarily being of a solemn, religious character, their votaries upon the earth, patterning after the *zodiacal churches* of their heavenly patrons, built their houses of worship on hills and mountains, or in the most elevated localities among human habitations.\*

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\* Finn Magnusen, differing from the Eddaic account on this subject, predicates a Scandinavian Olympus, or a conical moun-



## CHAPTER V.

## THE PROVIDENCE OF THE SCANDINAVIAN GODS.

FROM the foregoing delineations of the nature and the functions of the Scandinavian deities, it is clear that they took a deep and abiding interest in the affairs of this world; and that their zealous and ingenuous worshippers constituted the especial objects of their parental care. To promote their welfare, they assiduously labored to render external nature propitious to their wants; and while they dwelled in heaven, the prayers of their confiding children ascended neither unheard nor unanswered to their celestial mansions. How different, therefore, are these considerate Norse divinities from a Baal, who stubbornly refused to be softened by the most vehement and prolonged entreaties of his despairing priests;\* or the listless god of the Epicurean philosophers, who esteem the government of the universe as beneath the dignity of his supine majesty,

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tain arising from the centre of the earth's disc, and towering high into ether, as the locality of Asgard, the city of the Scandinavian gods; the *holy mountain* of the Norse creed.

\* First Book of Kings, eighteenth chapter. From the general character of Baal, as we find it attested in history, the probability is that the *limping, halting* priests of this god, who, though stern and severe, could never justly be charged with insensibility to the distress or the wants of mortals, committed some flagrant mistake either in the form or the spirit of their invocations, on the memorable occasion of their disgraceful defeat and death at Mount Carmel,



and man as unworthy or as regardless of a divine interposition in human affairs. "Perhaps," says M. Mallet, in his *Northern Antiquities*, translated by Percy, "no religion ever attributed so much to a Divine Providence as that of the northern nations. This doctrine served them for a key, as commodious as it was universal, to unlock all the phenomena of nature without exception. The intelligences united to different bodies penetrated and moved them, and men needed not to look any further than to them, to find the cause of every thing they observed in them. Thus entire nature, animated and always moved immediately by one or more intelligent causes, was in their system nothing more than the organ or instrument of the divinity, and became a kind of book in which they thought they could read his will, his inclinations, and designs. Hence that weakness formerly common to so many nations, and of which the traces still subsist in many places, that makes them regard a thousand indifferent phenomena, such as the quivering of leaves, the crackling and color of flames, the fall of thunderbolts, the flight or singing of a bird, men's involuntary motions, their dreams and visions, the movements of the pulse, etc., as intimations which God gives to wise men, of his will. Hence came oracles, divinations, auspices, presages, and lots; in a word, all that rubbish of superstitions called at one time religion, at another magic, a science absurd to the eyes of reason, but suitable to the impatience and restlessness of our desires, and which only betrays the weakness of human nature, in promising to relieve it. Such, notwithstanding, was the principal consequence

which the Teutonic nations drew from the doctrine of a Divine Providence.\*

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\* The doctrine advanced in this chapter is not only an exemplification of the faith of a numerous people, in an overruling Providence, but also a striking confirmation of our theory of the origin of religious ideas. It either involves truths which are comprehended by all, and which therefore constitute the popular or exoteric part of natural religion; or it includes a more profound development and a holier significance, recognized only by priests, and sages — the initiated into esoteric religion, and is thus the basis of the *sacred mysteries* and the hieroglyphical symbols of abstract theological truths. In either acceptance, therefore, they are not truths which deserve unqualifiedly to be stigmatized as a *rubbish of dark superstition*, or a *science absurd to the eyes of reason*, unless the first modes of a feeble, infantine reasoning on the manifestations of God in nature, or the incipient stages of a religious philosophy, can with propriety be thus designated. There can be no *rubbish*, no *absurdity*, in the primitive, childlike faith or researches of mankind, unless we pervert the meaning of words, or subvert the principles of truth, where the materials for a temple of the Deity are gathered fresh from the storehouse of creation, though man has not yet attained to the artistic skill to fashion and form them into a symmetrical and stately edifice.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE YGGDRASIL, THE MUNDANE SNAKE, THE WORLD-MOUNTAINS, AND THE PILLARS AND PYRAMIDS OF THE WORLD.

## PARAGRAPH I.

*The Yggdrasill.*

THE ash Yggdrasill, or the mundane tree of the Scandinavians, is represented in the Eddas, the Völuspa, the Grimnis-mal, etc., as the greatest and best of all trees. Under its gigantic branches, which wave in luxuriant profusion over the illimitable creation, and extend even above the ample limits of heaven, near the Urdar-fountain, is the doomstead of the gods, or the place where in solemn conclave they arbitrate the fate of the universe. Thither they repair every day on horseback, crossing Bifrost, the glory-striped Aesir-bridge. Thor alone goes on foot, for fear of setting Bifrost on fire with his thunder-car, and besides rendering boiling hot the Urdar-waters. This enormous tree stands over the renowned and sacred Urdar-fountain, and flourishes in perennial bloom and verdure. Three prodigious roots, widely separated, and embracing in their extensive ramifications the vast empire of creation, firmly fix it in its place. According to one account of the Yggdrasill myth, Hela dwells under one of them; the frost and mountain-giants, under the other; and mankind under the third. Another ver-

sion of the legend extends one of the massive roots to the habitation of Aesir, or to heaven, and to it assigns the Urdar-fountain exclusively. It must therefore reach above Asgard, as the gods daily ride *up* to it. The next is made to terminate among the giants already mentioned, and in the very place formerly occupied by Ginnunga-gap. Under this root is situated Mimir's celebrated well, in which wit and wisdom lie hidden: it is thus named from its owner, who became distinguished for his sapient qualities, in consequence of drinking every morning of the water of his well from the horn Gjöll. One day Odin the Alfadir came and begged a draught of this marvellous water; he readily obtained it, but in lieu of it he was obliged to leave one of his eyes as a pledge. The third, under which is the spring Hvergelmir, and which is constantly gnawed by the Nidhögg, strikes its innumerable fibres into Niflheim.\* On the top of the tree thus poised in

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\* The mythologies of other nations also claim and celebrate their mundane trees, and it is exceedingly probable that the Scandinavian Yggdrasill was once the thrifty scion of one of these ancient trunks. That of the Thibetans is called *Zampuh*, and grows on the south side of the world-mountain denominated Riron. Its roots extend towards the east, and its branches reach so far into the west that they encroach upon the north, and even touch the very apex of the mountain. In short, they embrace the whole world. *Aswatha* distinguishes the name of the mundane tree of the Hindoos. Its branches, according to Kanne's *Pantheum der Aeltesten Philosophie*, etc., are called the limbs or organs—the constituent parts of the visible or sensual world; and its leaves are denotive of the Vedas, which again are the symbols of the universe in its intellectual character. Of the *Aswatha* and the Persian *Gogard* we shall presently speak more

the centre of the universe, is perched an eagle, famed no less than Mimir himself, for its superior

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at large. What, it is natural to ask, gave rise to these myths of the world-trees? Are they the playful productions of the fertile fancies of the poets? or have they a basis in reality? Who is able to penetrate through the grey mist of ages, and, laying bare the root of the first Yggdrasill, say, Here is the beginning of the world-tree myths? The following curious facts in natural history, taken from Moore's *Rural New Yorker*, for January and February of the current year, favor the idea of existent realities as their prototypes. They relate to the vegetable kingdom, and comprise two of the most remarkable trees known to phytonic science. The *Rain-tree* first demands our attention. "The island of Fierro is one of the most considerable of the Canaries, and I conceive that name to be given it upon this account, that its soil not affording so much as a drop of fresh water, seems to be of iron; and indeed, there is in this island, neither river nor rivulet, nor well nor spring, save that only towards the seaside there are some wells; but they lie at such a distance from the city, that the inhabitants can make no more use of them. But the great Preserver and Sustainer of all, remedies this inconvenience by a way so extraordinary, that man will be forced to sit down and acknowledge that he gives in this an undeniable demonstration of his goodness and infinite providence. For, in the midst, there is a tree which is the only one of the kind, inasmuch as it hath no resemblance to those mentioned by us in this relation, nor to any other known to us in Europe. The leaves of it are long and narrow, and continue in a constant verdure, winter and summer; and its branches are covered with a cloud which is never dispelled, but resolved into a moisture, causes to fall from its leaves a very clear water, and that in such abundance that the cisterns, which are placed at the foot of the tree to receive it, are never empty, but contain enough to supply both man and beast." Who does not perceive a striking resemblance between the copious aqueous depositions of the Rain-tree, and the Urdar-fountain of the Yggdrasill? — The marvellous *Kounboun* next passes in review before us, and is thus described: "M. Huc, in his 'Travels in Tartary



sapience. Between its lustrous eyes, sits the hawk Vedurfölnir. The squirrel Ratolsk — insolent little beast! runs up and down the immortal ash, and seeks to cause strife between the *bird of heaven* and Nidhögg, the huge mundane snake, and the envious gnawer at the Yggdrasill-root; with which, it is asserted, so multitudinous a host of the ophidian race is associated, that no tongue can recount it. Four harts bound across the spreading branches of this noble tree, browsing on its buds and leaves. Near the Urdar-fountain, is located a very beautiful dwelling, inhabited by three maidens, named Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld — the present, the past, and the future: they fix the term of human life, and are

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and Thibet,' found many wonders; among them, a singular tree called Kounboun, or Tree of Ten Thousand Images, growing not far from one of the principal Buddhist temples in the latter country. The marvel of it is, that there are upon each of these leaves well-formed Thibetan characters, all of a green color, some darker, some lighter than the leaf itself. The characters are portions of the leaf itself, and are also found upon the bark of the trunk and branches. In removing a part of the old bark, the indistinct outlines of characters were seen on the new bark under it, but different from those removed. The tree is of great age and size, and the Lamas informed M. Hue that it was the only one of the kind in existence, and that all efforts to propagate it by seeds and cuttings had failed. Our traveller made a most minute examination, and became convinced that there was no trickery in the case." — This is the Thibetan *Tree of Knowledge*. *Koun* is derived from the Hindoo *kanna*, the eye; hence *kiena*, knowledge — *scientia*, in Latin, and *kenner*, in German. I will only add, that, according to Blackwell, the May-pole and the German *Christbaum*, have a pagan origin, the type of both being the ash Yggdrasill.



called Norns, Parcae or fates.\* Every day they draw water from the Urdar-fountain, and with it and the clay which lies around it, sprinkle the ash, that its branches may not rot and wither away. The water of this fountain is so exceedingly pure and holy, that any thing which is immersed in it, becomes as white as the membranous tissue which lines the inside of an *egg-shell*. The exhalations of the ash thus sprinkled, condense and fall to the earth, when men call them honey-dew, and it is the food of bees. Two snow-white swans are nourished from the Urdar-waters, and they claim the parentage of all birds bearing their name. This intricate and ingenious arborial structure, together with its various and interesting appurtenances, merits the attempts at least of a critical and careful elucidation, the result of which is accordingly here laid before the reader. As Ymir represents the inert material world, so the Yggdrasill is doubtless to be regarded as the symbol of organic existence, in all its diver-

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\* There are many Norns beside the three enumerated in the text. Some are said to belong to the Aesir, and others, to the races of the elves and the dwarfs. *Those* are of a heavenly, *these*, of an earthly origin. Good Norns dispense good, evil Norns, evil destinies. The elves are the males, and the Valkyr-jor — choosers of the slain, created by Odin after his draught from Mimir's well had endowed him with the mysteries of magic, — the females of the same sprightly family of genii. The elves of the air are the elves of light; those of the water — die *Nixen*: naiads, the elves of darkness, or the *Davkalfar*. As to the dwarfs, they were bred in Ymir's body, and were at first only *maggots*, but by the will of the gods, they at last assumed the form and understanding of man: they always dwell in rocks and caverns.

sified phases of development. Its three roots can mean nothing but the physical, the intellectual, and the moral elements of being. The basis of man's as well as the world's creation, being water, the swan typifies the infant soul or being still swimming upon the water; and its white plumage denotes the innocence and purity of new-born man. White, too, is typical of the wintry Niflheim—the cosmical womb containing the *prima materia* of Ginnungagap. The Hindoo Brahma—the creator of the world, is represented as sitting upon a swimming swan, thus symbolizing the origin of creation.\* The transforming virtue of the Urdar-water, converting every thing with which it comes in contact into the purest white, implies the good and the beautiful in mundane existence. The matured mind is represented by the eagle, while the hawk typifies internal sensation. In the East, the north is called the top or zenith, and hence by its position on the top of the ash—the north pole of the world, the eagle, considered in its macrocosmic import, denotes, no doubt, the north. Njord resides in Noatun—the night or the north, and one of his symbols is the feathery integument of the eagle.† The serpent Nidhögg is the emblem of night in its primitive import: it

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\* According to an Egyptian myth, the *floating isle* of Chemmis, called into existence by Apollo, sprang genetically from the egg of the mundane swan.

† The eagle inhabits the north, and clothed in its plumage, the god Njord sometimes indulges in works of volitation, creating a wind which is called the eagle-wind—*aquilo*, or the north-wind; and in the language of the Greenlanders, the eagle is denominated the *bird of night*: literally the *night-like bird*.—Kanne.

gnaws at the root of the ash in 'Hvergelmir. Night is *Nichts* — nothing ; that is, a negation, yet an evil striving to annihilate its antithesis. In its ethical import, Nidhögg, composed of *Nid*, which is synonymous with the German *Neid* or envy, and *hoggr*, to hew or gnaw, signifying the envious gnawer, involves the idea of all moral evil, typified as the destroyer of the root of the tree of life. In their moral significance, the harts may be considered as expressive of the restless and troubled passions of the mind feeding upon the green leaves—the healthy thoughts of the soul; in their mundane relation, as the corroding tooth of time. The squirrel, running between the king of birds and the hideous world-snake, illustrates the alternate influence which the animal and the intellectual faculties exercise over each other. In its more extensive import, it may be viewed as expressive of an equation of good and evil in the universe. As the genesis of existence is in water, so wisdom originates by imbibition, and even Odin obtains the precious gift in this way; but he is obliged to *pledge* one of his eyes for a draught from Mimir's well—a singular exchange which, according to some interpreters of mythic lore, means that Odin is the sun whose image is reflected in the water. Cosmically applied, the pledge of the god may be understood as symbolical of his creative power—the reflection of his divine attributes, and its recognition as a reality distinct from himself—the world; yet a reality evolved or born out of him, and existing only through him.\*

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\* Odin drinks Mimir's water from the *fulgid* horn Gjoll; that is,

In oriental myths, the sun and moon are called the *two eyes* of the world. The former, as the generative primeval light — the eye in the water; the latter, as the ray-embraced, impregnated eye, reflecting the solar light. To understand this theory clearly, it is necessary to bear in mind, that in the ancient systems of cosmogony, the sun represents all the active or more powerful forces in nature, especially light and heat, and the moon, all the passive or more feeble principles and elementary combinations in the universe, especially night and cold, the earth and the water. Proserpine is not only Helena or the moon, but also Demeter, the earth, and by descending still lower in her evolutions, she figures as the sombre *queen of hell*, or of Hades. In her lunarian capacity, she is moreover the mother of night and thaw. In short, the sun is the south pole, the Muspellheim, and the moon the north pole, the nebulous, dark, cold Niflheim of the world. When Narcissus saw his image reflected in a fountain, it is said he became *enamoured* with it, and was changed into the flower which bears his name; that is, he, the pure celestial spirit, derived, according to the doctrine of the Platonic philosophers, from the empyrean spheres, descended to the earth, or became incarnated mind, mixed with matter; which is the same

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intelligence united to sound, becomes the creative word: *he leaves an eye*. As long as both his eyes were closed, he had both; when they were opened, and he looked into the fountain of life — the prolific and regenerative source from which he again revived dead nature, he parted with creative power: the world lost an eye, a portion of divine energy.

as to say that the Supreme Mind revealed himself as an individual intelligence, and became an evolutionary part of creation. As to the gods sitting daily in judgment under the Yggdrasill, it can scarcely mean any thing else but that they exercise a vigilant and rigorous providence over the world, or execute the laws upon which are based the integrity and perpetuity of the universe. The bees and the honey-dew yet remain to be considered. With the bee, whose food is ordinarily the nectar of flowers, the idea of a primeval, pure, and innocent diet, such as may be supposed to have distinguished the patriarchal state of the world, is connected. On honey, the fertile fancy of the heathens presumed the progenitors of the human race to have subsisted, while they continued in a paradisian state of sinless purity; were animated by holy and heavenly aspirations; and practised the loftiest yet the most child-like devotion: the young bee in its larva-innocence, likewise feeds upon ambrosia, or the pollen of flowers. The nymph Melissa has the honor to have introduced this luscious production into the world; and some of the most ancient priestesses, the Milissas, bearing the same name as the bees, deserve the praise of having first called the attention of the nations to the cultivation of grain, the first, and, it was believed, also the best kind of agrarian food for man. Plain, wholesome diet; a simple, genial devotion; and a stainless moral purity, are therefore the dominant ideas which are symbolized by this melliferous insect, distinguished at once for its cleanly and industrious habits, its economical utility, and its strict and admirable system of social polity.



Though often sallying forth from its hive to revel in the breeze, and feast upon the gifts of Flora, the bee loves its home, and fails not to return to it; and for this reason, the ancients considered it to be a fit emblem of the soul, which, descending to the earth from the mansions of the gods, at the period of childbirth, keeps itself prepared by the observance of a pious and holy life, soon to return to a higher sphere of being—its pristine abode. In this higher relation, the bee is hieroglyphically associated with Proserpine *the pure*: the conductress of the souls into and out of the body. It was also the acknowledged type of the nourishing and fostering maternal goddesses—the Ephesian Artemis, or Diana, and Ceres, and wont to figure as one of their chief hieroglyphical insignia. The honey-dew, the food of the busy Yggdrasill-bees, falls in the night under a reduced temperature, when the atmosphere is charged with humidity, and, as far as the passive principle of creation is concerned, it therefore typifies the creation of the world out of water, at that nascent period of time when gelid vapors and thick darkness lay brooding over the fluid mass. The bees feeding upon it, is denotive of the active principle of creation—the luminous, torrid rays streaming forth from the empyrean Muspellheim, which, impinging upon the waters in Ginnunga-gap, begat the primal fruit and incipient forms of the infant world. Finally, of honey is prepared the food of the gods, and as honey, in the Scandinavian myth, is derived from the copious dew of the mundane ash; and again, as the Yggdrasill-dew is symbolical of the passive, cosmic principle, or the *prima materia* of the



world, the eating of the honey on the part of the gods, implies that they are the active powers in nature — the celestial architects and controllers of the universe.

## PARAGRAPH II.

*The Yggdrasil and Nidhogg illustrated from the doctrines of the Grecian and Oriental mythologies of the mundane tree, the mundane snake, together with an investigation of the world-mountains, and the pillars and pyramids of the world.*

According to the Hindoo mythology, the universe is portrayed under the form of a tree, called *Asvatha*, or *Asvatha*, the position of which is reversed, the branches extending downwards and the root upwards; the latter assuming *this* direction, because in the dark region of the north pole is the root or origin of all creation; and the former that, because they typify all the numerous objects of sense in the external world — the members and organs of the cosmical body. In other words, the root symbolizes the genesis of the world in God, while the branches are denotive of the creative energy of the Deity realized in the production of the universe. This energy begins its revelation above in a point, and ends below in multitudinous ramifications. Man, too, as a constituent part of creation, has his origin in a tree, called, in the cosmogonic myth of the Persians, the *Gogard*, or *tree of life*, inasmuch as the first pair of our race, Meshia and Meshiane, while yet inclosed in it, were still in God and in a state of innocence; but *Riva* or *Ribas* — separation or strife, alluding to man's hypostatical or distinct

individual existence: any thing out of God is of course a separation, and created intelligences, such as the original man and woman, are not in unity but in antagonism with God. It is further to be observed, that the myth under consideration supposes the prototypes of our race while inclosed in the microcosmic tree, to have been but one individual, and to have existed in an *androgynal* state.\* This dogma is to be understood thus: man began his existence as the Divine intelligence; for there is but one Spirit, however many spiritual gifts there may be, and God knowing or recognizing himself in contemplating the woman—material existence in its unformed state; or, which is the same thing, the passive principles and elements of creation, is God-man or male humanity, and as long as this recognition or *sciens* of himself does not become a hypostasis, or an individual distinct from himself, but continues to remain in him, the man and woman are in a state of androgynal union. As soon, however, as it assumes form and being out of God, there is a male and female humanity in a separate state of individuality: the division line between the

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\* Upon the authority of the *Bundehesh*, Kanne states that this tree resembled two human bodies placed in juxtaposition, one introducing a hand into the ear of the other, while both were so intimately united that they seemed to constitute but one body, etc. It is evident that the hand here is intended as the symbol of *generation*. Numerous instances might be quoted in proof of this fact, one, however, will suffice on this occasion. A Nepaulese branch of the huge Hindoo mythological tree, relates that the will of God, appearing in the form of a woman, created Brahma, Vichnu, and Siva, by simply *striking her hands together*!

Creator and the creature stands out in bold relief. When, as it is related in the mythic records of the Greeks, Bacchus *saw his image*, nature was realized: the world in the god became the world out of the god! In order to produce the universe, Brahma, the Hindoo creator of the world, assumed the hermaphrodite form; that is, he revealed himself at once in the unity of the active and passive attributes of creation. According to the Persians, the root of the tree of life was gnawed, not by a noxious serpent, but by a *venomous toad*; but the cosmogony of the philosopher Pherecydes informs us again that a *snake* was lodged among the branches of the oak, deemed sacred as the Gogard, or tree of life, among the Hellenic people. In the ancient mythologies of the East, the snake appears at once as a good and an evil being — as *agathodaimon* and *kakothodaimon*. In the beginning — thus proceeds the cosmogonic myth — were water and the prolific slime *ilus, ule*, from which crept forth the mundane snake. This protogonos-being was furnished with the heads of a ram, a bull — *taurus*, and a lion; had wings at the sides; and bore the physiognomy of the god Phanes — the apparent or revealed. The heads of the three quadrupeds, as distinctive traits of this snake, refer to the zodiac, while the snake itself is the symbol of Cneph, *the hidden deity*, revealed in time within the great, living ring of the snake, and hence distinguished as Phanes. The mundane snake unrolls itself as the *mundane year*; as the year revolving within the zodiacal signs of Aries, Taurus, Leo, etc. Time thus unfolding itself, is measured in the ecliptic as days, years, eras, etc. Besides, time has

wings, and hence the world-snake is represented winged. The central face of the snake, reflecting the image of the Deity, is emblematical of the fact that God is the centre of creation and of providence. The head of the bull, as a component part of the world-snake, is expressive of profound significance. In primeval time, the year commenced when the vernal equinox was in Taurus, and hence the bull, or the ox in its *generic* acceptation, is represented as rising up out of the abyss — the Ginnunga-gap of creation: he stands at the roseate dawn of time, and years and months are called oxen — *bous*, *boes*, or *boves*.\* Hence at Memphis, in the area of the temple, devoted to Phthas the creator, the bull appears as the type of the Eternal, and as such he is the consecrated medium of Divine worship. The snake, encircling the urn, or water-vase, agreeably to the Egyptian mythology, is Cneph, the good spirit, hovering over the waters. As agathodaimon, the snake is also the emblem of health and the healing

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\* According to the doctrine of the early Persian or Iranite Magi, the first living being was the ox *Abudad*, which was slain by Ahriman; but Ormuzd formed from its body the different species of beasts, birds, and fishes, trees, plants, etc. When the ox expired, a being called Kajomorz sprang from its right leg. Kajomorz was killed by the Devs, but after the elementary particles that entered into the composition of his body had been purified in the light of the sun during forty years, they became the germ of the Ribas tree, out of which Ormuzd made the first man and woman, Meshia and Meshiane, infusing into them the breath of life and spirituality. He thus completed the work of creation in six periods, holding at the end of each the festival *Gahanbar*. — Blackwell.

art, and of immortality or a life to come.\* On the contrary, the snake considered as the symbol or personification of Ahriman, Typhon, etc., is the evil snake — the *dragon*. In the great temple of Edfu, supposed by Jomard and his fellow savans to have been built during the period of time, when the summer solstice took place in the sign of Leo, appears a lion with the head of a hawk — the symbol of the culminating power of the sun, which has seized in its claws a coiled snake, the emblem of the noxious influences which succeed the recession of the *king of day* from the northern hemisphere. The snake, viewed in its malignant attributes, is the type of moral and physical evil generally, and as such, its effect upon the world is analogous to that of Typhonism, revealing itself in the subtle poison which

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\* The good snake encircles the image of the sanital goddess Minerva, and is the symbol both of the earth and of the goddess, in as far as she controls the spirit of *mother-earth*, and purifies and ameliorates it *agrarianly* and *medicinally*. In Egypt, the *cup of health*, dispensed by Serapis, Osiris, and Isis, was entwined by serpents: thus ornamented, it was probably one of the oldest hieroglyphical symbols of these divinities. In the country of the Pharaohs and of the Pyramids, snakes were kept in the temples; fed upon honey cakes; and venerated as the living representatives of the Hygienic gods. Sickler is of opinion that a healing virtue was attributed to snakes, in consequence of these reptiles affecting the localities of thermo-medicinal springs. Found in proximity to such waters, they must, he further presumes, have appeared in the eyes of primitive man as the warders of the Hygienic fountains, and the unerring guides to health and longevity. Discoveries such as these, naturally led to the choice of the snake as an appropriate symbol of health; of rejuvenated life; and of the Æsculapian profession.



it infuses into the vital juices of the vast and majestic mundane tree. According to mythic account, Erisichthon, the son of Triops the Thessalian, was doomed to suffer a most severe and protracted punishment through the instrumentality of a snake.

The following facts will acquaint us with the details of this tragic affair. Our hero is a mythic personage, of allegorical import, and signifies the sun in its greatest semiannual potency and splendor, when its scorching rays burn and consume the productions of the vegetable kingdom: a fact which is metaphorically expressed by stating that Erisichthon derided Ceres — the earth, and cut down her sacred grove. This solar *phthisis* is also personified under the appellation of *Aethon* — the consuming: an epithet applied with much force to Erisichthon or the sun at this season of the year, especially in a country like Egypt. Such, we are told, was the consuming, destroying propensity of the fiery sun-god, that if the mundane snake had not seasonably interfered, and infolded him within its constrictive coils, thus restraining him, he would have committed a suicidal self-destruction. The culprit Erisichthon, thus entwined by the puissant snake, which acted in this instance as the executioner of the vengeance of Ceres, is condemned by the offended goddess to take up his abode among the constellations, and there to exhibit himself before the gaze of the world as the Ophiuchus or *snake-holder*, and as a dread beacon of warning to all future ages, of the dire consequences of insulting her person or infringing her rights. When it is asserted that Erisichthon would have devoured himself in case the snake had



not interposed its punitive yet saving agency, the meaning is, that the sun would eventually have burned up every thing upon the earth, and thus annihilated its own *effective* power.\* Finally, after the autumnal equinox, this fiercely glowing god, or the summer sun, approaches gradually towards the winter solstice; it loses its accustomed influence more and more; night encroaches upon day; wet succeeds drought; and stern, tempestuous winter sways his ominous sceptre over the ruins of a once powerful and splendid empire. These physical changes in the laws and phenomena of the planetary system, whose centre is the sun, are personated by the autumnal snake; the evil snake; the *snake of the curse*, constricting and subduing Erisichthon. It may still be asked, How can this snake be defined as evil, when it has evidently accomplished a good? To understand this apparent contradiction, it should be borne in mind that good in its extreme is evil, and that therefore the ophidian vanquisher of Erisichthon is a curse in view of the long absence of the light and heat of summer during the winter season. It may not be inappropriate to remark, that instead of an entire grove, some authors make mention only of a famous poplar or oak, the daring destruction of which marked the extent of Erisichthon's impious outrage against Ceres; and it is over

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\*In performing this act of justice in behalf of Ceres, the snake is the good snake, but in sparing the life of Erisichthon, it is at once the good and the evil snake: the evil snake as it regards the preservation of the evil-doer; the good snake, as it respects the preservation of the world in its solar integrity.

the ample dimension of the violated, thrice sacred oak of the goddess, that Ovid thus pours out his unrestrained, prolific effusions :—

“ An ancient oak in the dark centre stood,  
The covert's glory, and itself a wood :  
Garlands embraced its shaft, and from the boughs  
Hung tablets, monuments of prosperous vows.  
In the cool dusk its unpierced verdure spread,  
The dryads oft their hallowed dances led ;  
And oft, when round their guaging arms they cast,  
Full fifteen ells it measured in the waist :  
Its height all under-standards did surpass,  
As they aspired above the humbler grass.  
These motives, which would gentler minds restrain,  
Could not make Triope's bold son abstain ;  
He sternly charged his slaves with strict decree  
To fell with gashing steel the sacred tree.  
But while they, lingering, his commands delayed,  
He snatched an axe, and thus blaspheming said :  
' Was this no oak, nor Ceres' favorite care,  
But Ceres' self, this arm, unawed, should dare  
Its leafy honors in the dust to spread,  
And level with the earth its airy head.'  
He spoke, and as he poised a slanting stroke,  
Sighs heaved, and tremblings shook the frightened oak :  
Its leaves looked sickly, pale its acorns grew,  
And its long branches sweat a chilly dew.  
But when his impious hand a wound bestowed,  
Blood from the mangled bark in currents flowed.  
When a devoted bull of mighty size,  
A sinning nation's grand atonement, dies,  
With such plenty from the spouting veins,  
A crimson stream the turfy altars stains.  
The wonder all amazed ; yet one more bold,  
The fact dissuading, strove his axe to hold.  
But the Thessalian, obstinately bent,  
Too proud to change, too hardened to repent,

On his kind monitor, his eyes, which burned  
 With rage, and with his eyes his weapon turned :  
 'Take the reward,' says he, 'of pious dread :'  
 Then with a blow lopped off his parted head.  
 No longer checked, the wretch his crime pursued,  
 Doubled his strokes, and sacrilege renew'd ;  
 When from the groaning trunk a voice was heard :  
 'A dryad I, by Ceres' love preferr'd,  
 Within the circle of this clasping rind  
 Coeval grew, and now in ruin join'd :  
 But instant vengeance shall thy sin pursue,  
 And death is cheered with this prophetic view.'"

As has been already shown, a deed so flagitious called for a speedy and condign punishment, and Ceres, agreeably to the fancy of the metamorphosizing poet, addressing a nymph, *the mountain's ranger*, revealed her plan, and in words like these charged her with her *high commands* : —

"Where frozen Scythia's utmost bound is placed,  
 A desert lies, a melancholy waste :  
 In yellow crops there Nature never smiled,  
 No fruitful tree to shade the barren wild.  
 There sluggish cold its icy station makes,  
 There paleness frights, and anguish trembling shakes.  
 Of *pining Famine* this the fated seat,  
 To whom my orders in these words repeat :  
 Bid her this miscreant with her sharpest pains  
 Chastise, and sheathe herself into his veins.  
 The fiend obeyed the goddess's command,  
 (Though their effects in opposition stand,)  
 She cut her way, supported by the wind,  
 And reached the mansion by the nymph assigned.  
 'Twas night, when, entering Erisichthon's room,  
 Dissolved in sleep, and thoughtless of his doom,  
 She clasped his limbs, by impious labor tired,  
 With battish wings, but her whole self inspired ;

Breathed on his throat and chest a tainting blast,  
And in his veins infused an endless fast.  
The task despatched, away the fury flies  
From plenteous regions, and from ripening skies ;  
To her old barren north she wings her speed,  
And cottages distressed with pinching need.  
Still slumbers Erisichthon's senses drown,  
And soothe his fancy with their softest down.  
He dreams of viands delicate to eat,  
And revels on imaginary meat.  
Chews with his working mouth, but chews in vain,  
And tires his grinding teeth with fruitless pain ;  
Deludes his throat with visionary fare,  
Feasts on the wind, and banquets on the air.  
The morning came, the night and slumbers passed,  
But still the furious pangs of hunger last ;  
The cank'rous rage still gnaws with griping pains,  
Stings in his throat, and in his bowels reigns.  
Straight he requires, impatient in demand,  
Provision from the air, the seas, the land.  
But though the land, air, seas, provisions grant,  
Starves at full tables, and complains of want.  
What to a people might in dole be paid,  
Or victual cities for a long blockade,  
Could not one wolfish appetite assuage ;  
For glutting nourishment increased its rage.  
As rivers poured from every distant shore  
The sea insatiate drinks, and thirsts for more,  
Or as the fire, which all materials burns,  
And wasted forests into ashes turns,  
Grows more voracious as the more it preys,  
Recruits dilate the flame, and spread the blaze,  
So impious Erisichthon's hunger raves,  
Receives refreshments, and refreshments craves.  
Food raises a desire for food, and meat  
Is but a new provocative to eat.  
He grows more empty, as the more supplied,  
And endless cramming but extends the void."

The world-mountains, Olympus, Meru, and Bordj, play a conspicuous part in ancient mythology, and have a significance which is analogous to that of the Yggdrasill, the Aswatha, the Gogard, etc., already described. Mount Olympus is located in the north-eastern limits of the ancient Thessaly, near the confines of Macedonia, now known as Roumelia, and which constitutes a part of the Ottoman empire in Europe. It is about twenty miles north of Larissa, and is separated from Mount Ossa by the famous vale of Tempe, through which the river Peneus, recognized in modern geography under the name of Salambria, discharges its limpid waters into the Aegean. Mount Olympus was emphatically the *holy* mountain of Greece, and distinguished preëminently as the choice abode of the gods. One of its significations is heaven, and it was the acknowledged heaven-mountain of the sprightly Hellenic race. Its other import is heaven and earth, or heavenly and earthly; a meaning which must necessarily be involved in a heaven-mountain, as it is the cosmic pole of the terrestrial and the supernal world. Jupiter held his august court upon its summit, and all the principal *superhadean* divinities of Greece were unanimous in selecting it as the most eligible site for their *diurnal* residence: in the night they lodged in their *starry domes*. The meeting of these magnificent beings upon their favorite mountain in the morning, and their departure from it in the evening, are thus vividly portrayed by one poet, and elegantly interpreted by another:—

“Twelve days were past, and now the dawning light  
The gods had summoned to the Olympian height:

Jove, first ascending from the watery bowers,  
Leads the long order of ethereal powers,  
When, like the morning-mist in early day,  
Rose from the flood the daughter of the sea;  
And to the seats divine her flight address'd.  
There, far apart, and high above the rest,  
The thunderer sat; where old Olympus shrouds  
His hundred heads in heaven, and props the clouds. —  
Meantime the radiant sun, to mortal sight  
Descending swift, rolled down the rapid light.  
Then to their starry domes the gods depart,  
The shining monuments of Vulcan's art:  
Jove on his couch reclined his awful head,  
And Juno slumbered on the golden bed."

Mount Olympus is said to be about a mile and a half in perpendicular height. Homer describes it as towering far above the clouds, *and crowned with fleecy snow*; while succeeding poets have not hesitated to clothe its summit in the soft and balmy attributes of perpetual spring. There were a number of other Olympic mountains both in Europe and in Asia, which were of course all heaven-mountains and mountains of the gods on a smaller scale and with humbler pretensions. A halo of glory shed its preternatural lustre over these celestial abodes, and stamped the impress of divinity upon every thing around them. By the exercise of a simple faith and an exuberant imagination, the ancients raised them even to the rank and dignity of gods; and Strabo distinctly states that Mount Amanus was worshipped with divine honors among the Persians. The lofty peaks of these mountains, wrapped in snow; shrouded in mist and clouds; or steeped in the mellow, cerulean tints of heaven, were presumed to conceal the sublime mysteries of



the generation and birth of the gods; and while, according to the creed of the Persians, the circumambient ether of empyrean space was the translucid sphere of Ormuzd's divine activity, the Greeks indulged in the belief that the whole atmospheric circumference of the glittering celestial vault, was Zeus or Jupiter, and therefore in the popular manifestation of their devotion, they worshipped it not only as a god, but as the chief of the mundane divinities.

The broad basis of the religious creed of the Hindoos, was the holy mountain Meru or Mandar, the old or mythic name of the Himmaleh mountains, especially the most elevated parts of them called the Dhawalgeri. It formed the solid foundation of their wide spreading and intricate religious system, and they unanimously regarded it as the prolific source of their origin, as well as the most sacred habitation of the gods.\* It was their firm conviction that a portion of the essential attributes of the true God-

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\*The ample base of Meru was supposed to rest upon the abyss of the world-fountain; and as it is the beneficent source or generator of innumerable brooks and torrents, whose myriad streams form the mighty Ganges and the dark-blue Indus, as well as many other rivers of inferior fame, a salubrious climate, a fertile soil, and an enchanting landscape, were, in a great measure, justly attributed to the fluviatile advantages which this sacred mountain conferred upon India. It will therefore be readily admitted that it was perfectly natural for its primitive inhabitants—the simple, unsophisticated children of nature, to deem it holy, and to venerate it as the mysterious laboratory of nature. In this *sanctum sanctorum* and cradle of the world, they excavated temples—*little Merus*, and inscribed the inside with the hieroglyphical symbols of their faith and of their hopes.

head lay concealed in the bowels of this Oriental Alp, and that its profound chasms attested his presence and proclaimed his energy. This idea, apparently so extravagant, will cease to excite our surprise, if we steadily bear in mind that this mountain is the Hindoo world-mountain; ay, the infinite mundane pillar, or Siva-pillar, in which the divinity of Siva was cosmogonically embodied, and from which the god went forth in the display of his omnipresence and power: as the sun, he rose and set on Meru, and during his reign above the horizon, he was the south pole; while in his subterranean orbit, he represented or expressed the north pole of the Meru-world.\* Within the profound recesses of this mysterious and wonderful mountain, the gods prepared the life-drink, the *prima materia* or atomic germs of organic life. Pervaded and animated by an invisible, divine power, it was here that the embryo-world originated, which, when it was fully developed, revealed God in space as the *nature of*

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\*It appears from Kanne, that the Meru, Mandar, and Kailaya, are interchangeable terms, and that they designate the same mountain. Upon this world-mountain, familiarly known as Meru, a temple is erected, and the Hindoos are accustomed to assemble at *Tirounamaly*, and to celebrate a grand festival in honor of the holy fane. At this place, and upon the day, *Paor-Nomi*, this extraordinary mountain was produced to personate Siva when he descended at that place in a *pillar of fire*, to settle a dispute among the gods upon the subject of precedence. To commemorate this event, the celestial pacificator converted his pillar of fire—the mundane embodiment of his divinity, into this mountain, that his pious votaries might recognize and worship him under this image—the symbol of his divine presence and providence.

*things*. Meru bears the appellation of Himmaleh, or snow mountain, on account of its snow-capt summit, which, in a macrocosmic sense, is its north pole communicating hieroglyphically with the invisible world, while the centre of its basis is its south pole, both thus forming the nexus between the material and the spiritual universe. It has also a north and south phasis; the former is dark and cold, the latter luminous and warm. *That* is the true Himmaleh, while *this* is known as Calais, a term which is derived from *Kelees*, which denotes hot, or burning. Hence these two opposite points of Meru constitute its two little or microcosmic poles. The mountain designated the Bordj, with the article Al-bordj, is the mythic world-mountain of the ancient Persians. Its name, according to Kanne, who, however, ignores the prefix *Al* as its article, signifies the *taurus-mountain*, and is etymologically composed of *Alb*, denoting an ox, in its generic acceptation, and *Ordi*, meaning the earth,—an appellation which, if founded in a true *etymon*, refers, no doubt, to the commencement of astronomical time in the sign of Taurus; a fact which it was easy for the human mind to apply by a *metastasio* figure, to the origin of the world, especially as all *kosmos*—order and beauty of creation, could but exist synchronically with the periodical revolutions of the planetary spheres. From this mountain, all mundane existence took its rise, and the stars leapt into their orbicular paths. Cosmically considered, it is the symbol of creation and its genetic connection with the Infinite, Supreme Essence, *Zeruane Akerene*; a

name the literal meaning of which is, the Illimitable or Uncreated Time. The Bordj is unhesitatingly affirmed to be the *navel* of the world, and the mountain of mountains. It towers far above the most elevated parts of the earth, and fans its lofty brow in the subtile ether of heaven. From it have descended prophets and lawgivers, who imparted to mankind the rays of a purer light, and opened to them the vista of a brighter hope. Suffice it to say, it was the prolific seed-bed and potent centre of the religious dogmas and liturgic rites of the ancient Persians.—The pyramids of Egypt, the most lofty and stupendous monuments of ancient architecture, are the artistic world-mountains and world-trees of the people of the Nile. The symbolical representation of the world in the Egyptian temples, as described by Creuzer and the French savans, fully corroborates this fact. Placed within one of those sacred structures—that of Dendara, for example, containing the zodiacal sphere within its cupola, let us call to mind the normal or primeval era of the celestial signs, at the solemn and decisive moment of the commencement of the *great year*, in the holy night of the first summer solstice succeeding the termination of a tempic cycle of three thousand years, and we shall perceive in the centre of the hieroglyphical firmament the ram, the emblem of Amun, or Jupiter-Ammon, the primordial light, and God of gods. Further down appear the rest of the ecliptic symbols, followed by their satellites, etc., and thus descending through all the spheres until merging beneath the moon, and at last arriving at the terrestrial gods, when the grand planetary pyra-

mid terminates in Isis, the broad and solid basis comprising all material existence.

The better to appreciate an investigation like the present, it should be carefully borne in mind, that, according to the cosmic and theogonic systems of the ancients, all the mundane gods, as well as all the constituent elements of the universe, respectively well and flow out of each other, while the life-stream of existence which supplies all these evolutions or cosmic sequences, emanates from the source of all being — the self-existent Divinity; and that from its apex to its foundation, this pyramidal world-structure, thus evolved and united in a genitive relationship of its parts, is sustained or borne up by a cosmic band of resplendent light terminating in the hands of Annubis-Thoth-Hermes, the Supreme Spirit, and omnipotent controller of the mundane spheres. The priest representing Hermes, stands at the sacred altar with the Hermes-lantern in his hand: it is the pregnant symbol of the universe, and of the astounding drama which the gods enact in it; or, in other words, of all the diversified and efficient manifestations of the deities and of organic existence. In the top of this mundane lantern are the holy oil and the lampic flame, typifying central planetary light with its nebulous atmosphere. The centre of it is furnished with a mirror containing fruits and plants — the emblems of organic life, and at its base is placed a vase replenished with the holy water of the Nile. Whoever looks into this *magic* reflector beholds the image of the universe! I will only add that, according to Arabian writers, each of the seven chambers of the pyramids bore



the name of a planet, and that therefore the primary design of those who reared these massive structures was to symbolize a great cosmic truth.\* This view of the subject is still further confirmed by the following observations of a writer in the *New Edinburgh Encyclopædia*: "In all the pyramids," says he, "the entrance is in the north front, and the descending passages have an angle of twenty-six or twenty-seven degrees. This line seems to be nearly directed to the pole star, and the north face of the pyramid to be almost in a plane of the earth's equator. This we believe has never been remarked; and we want only accurate measures to put it beyond a doubt. But if they even deviated two or three degrees, this only shows the rudeness of astronomical knowledge at the time when the pyramids were built, or the rudeness of the methods by which the angles were laid down."

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\* As repositories of the dead, the pyramids played a subordinate yet significant part, while their architectural forms were intimately connected with one of the primary intentions of their builders. As the original design in constructing them was to typify the emanation of all things from a point in the invisible world—represented by the apex of the pyramid, whence they subtended and spread out into circumambient space like the branches of an inverted tree; so the sepulchral use to which they were applied, had for its object to place the soul, confined in the embalmed and mummied body, in such a position where, at the expiration of three thousand years, when it should again return to its primeval state to recommence a course of active existence or undergo another evolution, it might be able the more readily to effect this important end through the medium of the mundane pillar—the pyramid, which communicated with the two worlds, and was the mystic link of both.



Among the Hindoos, all the pagodas are of a pyramidal or conical form, or have towers of that shape in the buildings which surround them. Sir William Jones seems to regard the pyramidal structures of antiquity, the tower of Babel not excepted, as the images of Manhadeva or Siva; and I may remark that at least as far as the Hindoos are concerned, this hypothesis is, *to some extent*, founded in truth, inasmuch as Meru is the embodied image and mundane repository of the divinity of Siva, and of course the sanctified type of all sacred architecture among his votaries. The pyramidal order of architecture appears to have prevailed universally among the people of remote ages, and to have been coextensive with the early civilization of the human race. According to Stephens's "Central America," the ruins of Copan, situated in the province of Honduras, teem with the pyramidal remains of the primitive inhabitants of that ancient city. Among the numerous structures of this kind which illustrate these ruins, the *Temple of Copan* deserves a brief notice. "This temple," writes our distinguished antiquary, "is an oblong inclosure. The front or river wall extends on a right line north and south six hundred and twenty-four feet, and it is from sixty to ninety feet in height. It is made of cut stones, from three to six feet in length, and a foot and a half in breadth. In many places the stones have been thrown down by bushes growing out of the crevices, and in one place there is a small opening, from which the ruins are sometimes called by the Indians, *las Ventanas*, or windows. The other three sides consist of ranges of steps and *pyramidal*

*structures*, rising from thirty to one hundred and forty feet in height on the slope. The whole line of survey is two thousand eight hundred and thirty-six feet, which though gigantic and extraordinary for a ruined structure of the aborigines, that the reader's imagination may not mislead him, I consider it necessary to say, is not so large as the base of the great Pyramid of Ghizeh.\* The obelisks of antiquity compose an important element in the category of cosmic symbols, and will therefore form the closing theme of this paragraph.

In the Zendavesta — the sacred Scriptures of the ancient Persians, the primeval fire is called the bond between Zeruane Akerene and Ormuzd, or between the Supreme God and his highest beneficent evolution, considered as the good mundane demiurgus. In relation to the First Cause, Mithras, the supermundane, highest emanation of the Supreme Being, and next to him in rank and power is the sun of grace; in relation to Ahriman, the fire of love; in relation to nature, the ward and purifier of the sun; in relation to mankind, the refiner; and in all these relations combined, the mediator. According to the foregoing dogmas, a *bond of fire* connects God and creation; Mithras mediates between the *one* Eternal and his *manifold* works; and these facts involve the

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\* This pyramid, known preëminently as the *great pyramid*, was built in the reign of the profligate Cheops; it required, according to Herodotus, twenty years in its erection; is, as we learn from Savary, five hundred and seventeen feet six inches in perpendicular height; and has a square base of seven hundred feet, covering an area of upwards of eleven acres. — G.

idea of an *obeliskic form* of agency between absolute and contingent existence, beginning in unity and terminating in plurality. The obelisks, dedicated to the sun as the representative and brightest image of the primordial light, were intended to typify its rays, both in respect to their lineal emission and their refracted expansion. Hence their apices generally point towards heaven, though the Mycenean and some others present a position the reverse of this, or obtuse summits and pointed bases; and the architects who thus erected them on a principle adverse to the laws of gravity, wished, no doubt, to symbolize the terrestrial fires, as they are recognized in volcanos; in coal and naphtha-beds; in inflammable gases; and in the ordinary forms of combustion, the rays of which ascend, and by their refraction in the lower strata of the atmosphere, form counterparts to the inverted obelisks. Among the sculptured remains which attest the plastic skill of the Persians, obelisks are actually found with *ascending rays*.\*

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\* Near Baku, a city of Georgia, situated upon the western coast of the Caspian Sea, the surface-soil is extensively impregnated with inflammable gas, evolved from the petroleum or naphtha with which the earth of that region abounds to an almost incredible degree. Viewed from a distance, the ignited jets of naphtha, issuing everywhere from the crevices of the soil during certain periods of the year, give to the country the appearance of a solid sheet of flame overspreading its surface. Here some of the Gebres or Guebres — the fire-worshippers of India, whither they emigrated to escape from the faith of the Koran or the scimitars of the *faithful*, have established a colony and founded a temple. For the following interesting facts, we are indebted to the *Russian Archives for Scientific Information*: "When," says a distinguished Russian lady who, with her husband and sons, vis-

The *Hermen*, *Ermin*, or *Irmansüule*, of the ancient Franks and other German nations, signifies an obelisk, a pyramid, etc.; and Mone teaches us that the Irman-obelisk, or pillar, was a statue of Irmin, the second son of Hermin; a name which conveyed the idea of man, or humanity. In the course of ages, the personal existence of Irmin became obliterated from the minds of his votaries, and his name, like that of his illustrious sire, came to denote mankind, especially the Teutonic people. I am of opinion that the Irmansul was one of the holy relics which these people carried with them in their emigration from Asia, and that instead of Irmin, it was originally designed to commemorate the name and character of the Egyptian god *Hermes*, the mythically and hieroglyphically acknowledged founder of obeliskic architecture; the father and first teacher of

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ited this Gebre temple, "we finally reached the place, it was pitch dark; the flames were rising in beautiful purity to the peaceful sky of night, and the entire castle within which was the temple, seemed to be surrounded by a circle of watchfires. These were lighted by Persians from the neighborhood, who were busy burning lime and baking bread. All that is necessary, to obtain the gas, is to make a hole in the ground, touch a burning coal to it, and an inexhaustible flame rises forth like a spring. Behind this range of little flames and fires, rose in the pale light the dirty white walls of the castle, in the centre of which there flashed from *the summit of two lofty pillars*, great masses of the purest, clearest, and keenest flames, which were now bent down horizontally and wreathed like serpents by the force of the wind, and now rose perpendicularly to the sky, whose dome they lighted up like two vast altar tapers, etc." The priest who officiated on this occasion, wore a white turban and a brown robe — the remnant majesty of a pristine glory!

all science; the erudite prototype of the sacerdotal order; the exalted bearer of the cosmical lantern and the cosmical mirror; the soul of the world; the author of all intellectual light and spiritual gifts: the mundane symbol of the Supreme Mind, and himself that Supreme Mind!

## DIVISION II.

THE GODS OF THE HEATHENS, REPRESENTED IN MYTHOLOGY AS THE MUNDANE SOURCES AND DISPENSERS OF LIGHT AND FIRE, AND CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THEIR PNEUMATICAL ATTRIBUTES, OR THEIR SPIRITUALITY, AND ETHICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER.

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### SECTION I.

THE MITHRAS AND MITRA OF THE PERSIANS.

AGREEABLY to the statement made by Firmicus, in his "Errours of Profane Religion," the existence of Mithras and Mitra had its origin in a metaphysical subtilty of the Persians, who resolved their supreme god Zeus into two sexes, represented by Mithras and Mitra, in whose persons they sought to symbolize and to adore the inherent pyric attributes of their Divine parent as male and female fires.\* With these ideas, excepting the *nominal*

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\* The reader will readily perceive that though the statement of Firmicus is *essentially* true, yet that in regard to the name of the Supreme Being of the Persians, it is palpably false; for not *Zeus*, but *Zeruane Akerene*, was the Supreme God of the ancient builders of Persepolis. The first, the highest, and the purest emanation from him, is Mithras, and Mithra is the mundane body, inclosing in her ample womb the fires of creation, infused into it by the primordial source of light, *Zeruane Akerene*, through the medium of Ormuzd, the creator of the world.



genesis of Mithras and Mitra, the doctrines of the Zendavesta — the bible of the ancient fire-worshippers, known as the Guebres or Parsees, perfectly agree. They proclaim fire as the omnipotent organ of divine energy, and teach that it includes masculine and feminine attributes, or that it is either generative or conceiving and bearing. Zoroaster, the world-renowned hierophant, called Zeratusht, Zerdusht, or Zaradush by the Persians, and Zoroastres by the Greeks, has the honor to have first promulgated, or at least reduced into a system, the tenets of the Zendavesta. This important event, the traces of which still exist among mankind, took place in the age of Gustasp, or Gushtasp, who is supposed by some authors — erroneously, no doubt, to be the same as Darius Hystaspes.\* Mitra was the name of the principal fire-goddess among the Persians. In Assyria she was worshipped under the appellation of Mylitta, and in Arabia under that of Alitta. Among the imaginative Greeks, she figured under the diversified cognomens of Ilithyia, Artemis, Aphrodite, Proserpine or Persephone, Urania, Hecate, etc., all the pyric excellences of whom, the devout Persians included in their idea of Mitra — the mother of the world and of all its generative productions. The name Mitra is supposed to be derived from the Persic *Mihr* or *Mihir* — love, and the graceful goddess who bears it is justly regarded as the Persian

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\* Hyde and Prideaux make Zoroaster contemporary with Darius Hystaspes: a supposition which confounds this prince with Gushtasp; while, as it appears from Moyle, the Greek writers of the age of Darius Hystaspes fixed the era of the hierophant many centuries anterior to their own time.

Venus.\* In her bright and caustic connubial relations, she claims Mithras as her illustrious and devoted consort, who also responds to the denomination of Perses, a title which is probably synonymous with the phrase *the Persian*, and signifies the light, or shining. This splendid name, under which Mithras had displayed his presence and received the homage due to a divinity of light and fire, in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Greece, at last survived only in the Sabazia, or orgies of Bacchus. Light and fire are not only the most subtile, but also the most pure and effective forms of matter in nature; and therefore, among all the elementary bodies of which the universe is composed, they may be reasonably presumed to be pre-eminently calculated to reflect with at least some approximation to truth, the power and glory of the Eternal. Hence we need not be surprised that fire-worship, or rather the worship of God under the personified symbols of fire, is almost coeval with the existence of the human race. Fire-worship appears to have been common to the ritual of the Bramins and the Parsees, and to have spread from India and Persia among the rest of mankind. Sabaism, or the worship of the sun, the moon, and the stars, is its most natural and most ancient form. Terrestrial fires: such, for instance, as those of the naphtha-fountains of Aderbidshan in Persia — the altar and vestal fires of nature's priesthood, whose pure, bright flame seems to vie with the eradiated fires of the celestial orbs, in illustrating and inculcating the

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\* Mihr denotes also the sun in its capacity of recipient of the luminous and caloric rays from the primordial light.

homage that is due to the Divine Majesty, may have suggested the idea of fire-altars, vestal fires, and the organization of a harmonious and an imposing liturgic fire-service among the nations of antiquity. Persia, — the land of light, has the honor to have borne away the palm among the ancients, in its profound devotion to the religion based upon the principles of light and heat; and it was in the Eden-plain of Schiras that the God of Light was adored in the worship and under the name of Mithras — the personified symbol of fire, as the masculine element of creation. Mithras, the deified symbol of light and fire, stood ethically between Ormuzd and Ahriman, and was therefore denominated the mediator: a function which does not imply a participation in the opposite and perverse nature of the latter of these mundane powers, but which is to be viewed merely as a gracious extension of aid to the beneficent god Ormuzd, for the important purpose of facilitating the reconciliation of the malignant Ahriman to Zeruane Akerene, and of eventually securing his submission to the divine laws. In his solar attribute, Mithras, considered in regard to day and night, is represented as dwelling both in the spheres of light and in the regions of darkness. As mediator between god and man, he is the suffering yet triumphant savior. He is emphatically called the *highest god*: a title which is strictly appropriate only when he is compared with other emanations of the Supreme Being; for he is the *prototokos* — the first-born of the gods. This circumstance, as also the fact that he is demiurgus, in as far as he supplies more immediately the means and preëminently di-

rects the ends of creation: thus acting as medial factor, or nexus, between the Eternal and Ormuzd, justly elevate him to the rank of the highest *mundane* divinity. Hence he is expressly called the organ or cosmic agent through whom all the elements and laws of the universe are controlled agreeably to the divine will.\* With the increasing civilization of mankind, and the consequent improvement of their religious ideas, the Mithras-creed was very widely disseminated. The Ethiopians revered the Persian fire-god as their oldest lawgiver and the founder of their religion. It was the popular belief of the people of the Nile that in Egypt — the land

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\* As the great Egyptian deity, known to us as Osiris — thus denominated from Hesios and Hieros: the things of Hades and of Heaven, the union or connection of which he personified, was the exalted model of conduct to every pious Egyptian; so Mithras — the magnificent fire divinity and effulgent genius of the sun, was the illustrious prototype of every Parsee: a name which accordingly signifies the clear, or the bright. His being consisted of light: in a *higher* sense, of intellectual light; and in the *highest* sense, of empyreal light, or *Divine* light and fire. In him every Parsee has a splendid precedent of a twofold glorification *through light, and into light*; and the lofty and admirable object of the Mithras-religion, or Magianism, is illumination, or the transformation of darkness into light, and the triumph of the good throughout all nature: in the body, in the soul, in the family circle, and in the state. Persia itself is, according to Creuzer, Pares and Pars — *the land of light*! Religion, liturgic service, ethics, civil institutions, political and domestic economy, constitute one organic and indivisible totality, founded and sustained upon the principles of light. So thoroughly did the idea of purity pervade the entire Mithras religion, and animate every relation of human life, that a solemn lustration, a *holy baptism of initiation*, was deemed indispensable to its professors.

of monumental fame, where Mithras and Meinnon reciprocated dominion or reigned in juxtaposition, the former built On or Heliopolis — the *sun-city*, whose first king bore the name of *Mitres* or *Mestres*; and that upon the suggestion of a dream he erected obelisks. They were sun-obelisks — solar monuments, or the architectural symbols of the origin and refractive expansion of the solar rays, and of the light which, emanating as the active principle of creation from the throne of God, reveals itself in the production of the universe, as its vast, ramous, obeliskic base. As the sun, considered upon the principles of pneumatology, Mithras bears a number of brilliant attributes; as, the eye of Ormuzd; the dazzling, fleet-coursing, and mighty hero; the fructifier of the desert; the most exalted of the Izedes — good genii; the sleepless; and the protector of Persia. Hence he is not only the sun, inasmuch as this glorious luminary is genetically derived from him as the honored and resplendent repository of the primeval light, but also the genius or controlling energy of the sun, dispensing as such the blessings of light and heat to mother earth. In the Mithras-caves, he was represented as standing between light and darkness — his position being at the entrance, in the sign of Taurus, the opener of the solar year, where night and day commingle, and twilight reigns. Here, upon the threshold of the rising year, he appears as the gallant champion of light and heat, wrestling with the dark, cold, wintry influences of the northern hemisphere. In other words, Mithras assumes his place in the vernal equinox, and has the north — in the language of the ancients,



the lower signs of the ecliptic, on his right, and the southern or upper on his left hand, standing at the sidereal division line of light and darkness, or at the point which marks the superior and inferior rotation of the planets: in popular phrase, between Heaven and Hades. Contemplated ethically as the personification of humanity, he is light and darkness, pure and impure; participates in the adversities and sorrows of mankind; but finally triumphs in good. At the consummation of all things, he will act as the mediator and umpire between light and darkness; annihilate the latter; and finally, by the eradication of evil, reconcile Ahriman to Ormuzd. From these researches, it is evident that Mithras is the cosmic basis of all things; that he is the unity before *duality*—the first and highest divine emanation; and that he is therefore *virtually* Zeruane Akerene himself, and hence appropriately styled *the Father*. As mediator *in the flesh*, Mithras conducts the souls of mortals back to God through the zodiacal path, in the same manner as he once led them into the body. Mythology records the existence of innumerable Mithras-hieroglyphics, representing the grand *taurian* sacrifice. The consecrated place of immolation is usually in the mouth of the Mithracosmic cave. According to Eubulus, Zoroaster, the golden star; the profound hierophant and venerable prophet; the bringer of the written law from heaven; the great Magus, and the immortal reformer of Magianism, constructed or prepared such a cave, in which he typified the nature and wonders of the universe. Every thing in this prototype of the Mithrasic caves, was singularly significant: the twilight—the em-



blem of the origin of all things in darkness through the agency of light; and the rock in which the cave was wrought, and which defined its area, denoted the pre-cosmic matter or the passive basis of organic existence. Within its circumference, were displayed all the planetary relations and forms of creation; as, the zones, the fixed stars, the primary and secondary planets, the zodiac, the elements, etc. In the entrance of the cave is seen Mithras in a flowing robe, a Phrygian cap, and a long nether garment, kneeling upon an ox — *taurus*, the tail of which terminates in three spikes of corn. With his left hand, the divine sacrificer closes the nostrils of the devoted beast, and with the right, plunges a dagger into his heart. A dog comes up in front of the victim; a snake crawls forth to lick his blood; and a scorpion nips him in the scrotum. Another Mithrasic cave, illustrating the mysteries and powers of creation, displays two persons, a youth and an aged man, the former bearing an upraised, and the latter, a declining torch. In the front part of the tableau is observed a tree, the leaf-buds of which are just unfolding themselves. Under the tree is perceived the head of an ox, presenting an erect torch; and behind it, another head of the same animal, containing fruit, accompanied by the scorpion already noticed, and bearing a reversed torch. The ceiling of the cave discloses to view seven Dadgahs, or fire-altars; and on its walls are portrayed the sun mounted upon a car, drawn by four coursers, facing the four cardinal points of the compass, and the moon going forth in her chariot propelled by two steeds, etc. Among the hieroglyphics of these caves,

figure also the palm-tree, the death-skull, etc. Beside the usual cosmic representations, in a Mithras-cave represented by Hyde, new objects are introduced into the scene, and old ones appear under modified forms. It, too, has its astronomical taurus, but on each side of him is a youth, the one holding an arrow, while the other typifies the impregnation of the earth. Its floor images the ocean and one of its most celebrated inhabitants—the dolphin. The following facts are the result of an attempt to elucidate the symbolical import of the taurian sacrifice as represented in the Mithras-caves. Mithras, as the symbol of the male-mundane fire, is said to be the son of the Persian world-mountain Bordj, from whose primeval rocks he went forth as a ray of fire, permeating and inflaming the earth.\* The ox,

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\* Mithras, born as a spark of the rocks of the Bordj, is an idea which, to the tyro in mythology, must seem to border on absurdity. Perhaps a ray of light may be thrown upon the mystery of the rock-born god. The Bordj, in its capacity of world-mountain, contains, mytho-philosophically speaking, the active and the passive principles of creation. Rock, or stone, is earth, according to the science of geology; and earth and water are the passive elements of cosmic existence—the female principles, agreeably to cosmogonic lore; the matrix in which the world was cast; the mother in whose fruitful womb it was connubially begotten. Light and fire, etc., are the active or male principles of creation, and these being infused into the passive elements of earth, water, etc., the union results in the procreation of the world. The pure element of fire, regarded as light and heat, is thus embodied in matter; the tellurian mother has conceived, and whenever fire is evolved or liberated from her body, she brings forth, and the child is greater and nobler than herself, for it is a male, and the reflection or reëmission of the primordial fire infused into her by the Creator. This creator, considered as the

which is immolated in the entrance of the cave, is the earth, which the great Dshemshid, in the character of the personified solar year, once cleaved with his golden dagger.\* In a more exalted sense, he is matter contemplated as the seed-womb of being, and therefore to be viewed as being of the feminine gender, while Mithras, the masculine power, is the demiurgic opener of this tellurian world-womb, whose waters are thus fructified by the fire-rays of the primordial light. Astronomically interpreted, Mithras is the sun, borne upon taurus, into which the sun enters at the vernal equinox.† It is then

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primary source of all things, is first and preëminently the Eternal himself, and secondly Mithras, viewed in his capacity of personified primordial light, and as such the *immediate* source of creation, both intellectually and as it regards its active and more ethereal elements—light and fire. Thus Mithras, born of the rock-mountain of the world—the Bordj, which is hence the Mitra or the feminine of Mithras: the Persian fire-goddess, and therefore at once the mother and the wife of the fire-god Mithras, is the electric spark of Zeruane Akerene, revealed in time and in the flesh. According to Kleuker, in his *Anhang zum Zendavesta*, the Bordj had once a real, historic existence. I will only add, that in consequence of his *petraic* birth, Mithras was honored among the Persians with the appellative formula of *Theos ek petras*—the god of the rock!

\* Dshemshid was among the ancient Persians what Alexander and Solomon were among the Greeks and Hebrews, the hero of the national myth and song. Under his reign Persia attained its greatest glory. He was at first known as Dshem, but Shid, meaning the sun, was added to his name on account of his resplendent beauty.

† About twenty-two centuries ago, the constellations of the zodiac and the signs of the ecliptic corresponded, but owing to the retrograde motion of the equinoxes, the latter have fallen

that this sun-god cleaves taurus, when his blood flows reeking to the earth and fructifies it. With the autumnal equinox, the sun passes into Scorpio, and now the vital energies of vegetation and the lower types of organic life generally, begin to wane or become exhausted, and nature pants for rest—the prelude of *re-creation*: the venomous insect—the scorpion, gnaws at the seminal glands of the taurian beast. The vernal tree is to be regarded as the type of spring, and the youth with the upraised torch, as the symbol of the ascension of the sun in the ecliptic, etc.; while the season of physical decay and elementary stagnation—the autumn, is further symbolized by the fruit-bearing tree, and the hoary, aged individual, tottering on the confines of life. The snake, licking up the blood of the expiring beast—the earth, stabbed by Mithras, or the sun, retrograding into the southern hemisphere, is to be regarded as the good snake, the agathodaimon, receiving the spilled life of the terrestrial taurus, and preserving it in its world-ring, which uncoils again at the coming spring. Only in so far as the snake completes the apparent destruction of taurus, and infallibly withholds its fructifying blood for a season, can it be considered as evil, and stigmatized as the snake of death. The dying taurus, viewed in his cosmic relation as *Abadus*, or the mundane taurus, typifies the dissolution of the world, and in this sense the snake is the world-snake, in the proper

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back of the former about thirty-one degrees, and therefore at present the vernal equinox opens in Aries instead of Taurus, as was then the case.

and most extensive import of the term. The sun and moon, and the seven fire-altars, designating the *seven planets*, as defined by the ancients, are emblematical of their solar system. The dog gazing at the expiring victim, is a concomitance of the good spirit, or the world contemplated as agathodaimon: the dog of hope and consolation, which reminds the dying world-beast of *Tashter* and regeneration, after the accomplishment of the great cosmic cycle of twelve thousand years. In short, he is the pregnant symbol of Sirius, or the dog-star, called Sothis — the star of salvation, among the Egyptians, and *Tashter*, by the Persians. When, at the consummation of all things, Sirius shall again cast a glance at the world, then will dawn the great and decisive day of palingenesis. Hence a practice of the ancient Persians, observed at the death-bed of their countrymen, and fraught with profound significance, is rendered intelligible to the mythological student. As soon as it was ascertained that the spirit of the death-doomed sufferer was about to desert its fragile tenement, the friends of the dying led a dog to him, which received a morsel of food out of his hand. This pathetic act was denominated *Sagdia* — the dog sees: a consoling pledge of a hopeful immortality. The dog eyeing the bleeding, dying taurus, expresses the same vaticinal idea cosmically. Thus this animal, so despised among the ancient Jews and the modern Turks, once figured as the hallowed prophet of a happy future, and the honored emblem of a certain and blissful resurrection. Governed by a similar faith, and animated with the same irrepressible desire of an ameliorated



immortality, the dying Hindoo, full of faith and piety, takes into his hand the tail of a cow, in order to purify his soul before its exit into another world.\* The Mithriaca, or Mithras-worship, was of a bland, cheerful character, and pleasure and festivities, not mortification and monastic austerity, marked the genial spirit by which it was animated. From Persia, as its focal centre, it spread to Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Cilicia, Greece—as has been already stated—Rome, and even Germany. Nay, it seems from Humboldt's "Pittoresken Ansichten der Cordilleren," that Mithras was not unknown in the halls and temples of the Montezumas. "It also appears," thus writes this distinguished German scholar, "that the Mexican Tonatiuh is identical both with the Krischna of the Hindoos, as he is celebrated in song in the Bhagavata Purana, and the

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\* The cow is employed for this purpose instead of the ox, probably because she is of a more gentle disposition, and therefore more tractable. The ox, properly speaking the bull, as the zodiacal sign in which the great year began, is the proper emblem of a life to come, and also a means of purification; for, regarded as the sun in the vernal equinox, he frees nature from the hurtful influences and dreary phenomena of the winter season. How important a part the dog played in the momentous dogmas of death and immortality, is seen from the circumstance that the fac-simile of a great many dogs is sculptured on the mortuary monument of Darius Hystaspes. In Greece, also, canine lustrations were devoutly practised, as it appears from Plutarch, who, speaking of the festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated on the eleventh of February, in honor of Pan, adds: "As to the dog, if this be a feast of lustration—it was, man of Chæroneia! we may suppose it is sacrificed, in order to be used in purifying; for the Greeks, in their purifications, make use of dogs, and perform the ceremonies which they call *Periskulakismoi*."—Langhorne.



*Mithras of the Persians.*" The Persians celebrated a splendid festival in honor of Mithras on the first day succeeding the winter solstice, called *Mirrhan*, or *Mirgan*, derived nominally from *Mihr* — the sun, the object of which was to commemorate the birth of Mithras, or the return of the *god of day* to the northern hemisphere. In Rome, the seven-hilled mistress of the world, the same festival was observed on the eighth of the calends of January, or the twenty-fifth of December, under the name of *Natalis solis Invicti*: a day of universal rejoicing, illustrated by illuminations and public games. Under the observance of various imposing and solemn ceremonies, the people sallied forth into open space, when they fixedly gazed up towards heaven, realizing and indexing the great event. With the eagle and standards of the Roman legions, the Mithriaca were introduced into the bogs and forests of Germany. According to Sattler's "*Geschichte des Herzogthums Wirtemberg*," some hieroglyphical remains attest the immigration of the Persian god to Fehlbach, where a stone has been found bearing the head of an ox, and in a different part of the kingdom another, containing the inscription of *Soli invicto Mithræ*. At Ladenburg, anciently known as *Lupodunum*, and situated on the Neckar, Mithras could boast of adorers, and glory in the symbols of his worship and of his divinity. A relief found there, represents the tauris-sacrifice under rather unusual accompaniments, indicative of an alliance of Magianism with Sabazianism, or the orgies of the Thracian Bacchus. Mithras is likewise known as the *triplex*, in allusion to the ancient division of the year into

three seasons. In more recent times, a square or a circle divided into four segments, and intended as a symbol of Mithras, is supposed to have signified the four seasons, which are now recognized in the temperate zone: some authors make it denotive of the *four* elements; and I add that it may at the same time have implied the quadrifid division of the earth by its pole and equator. To Mithras, as the prolific source of generation, the trigon—the emblem of fruitfulness, was sacred. Its origin is to be sought in the celebrated *phallus*, so frequently condemned, and so seldom understood. It denotes the *simulacrum ligneum membri virilis*, which Isis, after the murder of Osiris, unable to recover the *real organ* among the mangled and scattered remains of her unfortunate husband, with great skill and unanimity substituted in its place. A representation of it made of wood, was the phallus, which was carried in procession during the sacred festivals instituted in honor of Osiris. The people looked upon it as the emblem of fecundity, and the mention of it among the ancients, never conveyed any impure thought or lascivious reflection. The festivals of the phallus were imitated by the Greeks, and introduced into other parts of Europe by the Athenians, who made the phallus-procession a part of the celebration of the Dionysia of the god of wine.

The lions with the attributes of Mithras and Mitra-Venus, appearing in relief on both sides of the gate-pillar of Micenæ, a town of Argolis in Peloponnesus, denote the active and passive state of nature during the time when the sun is in Leo,—now Cancer,—the period of the year at which

the fiery god penetrates with his glowing rays both the solid earth and the fluid abyss of the ocean. The pillar itself is a symbol of Mithras regarded as the sun, or rather as the genius and warder of the solar orb. Obelisks, the expressive types of the sun's rays, were sacred to him. Finally, the lion figuring in isolated majesty among his insignia, implies the sun in its culmination, and the empyrean fires of the celestial world.

## SECTION II.

VESTA, HER FIRES AND PRIESTESSES; ZEUS, OR JUPITER.

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### CHAPTER I.

VESTA, HER FIRES AND PRIESTESSES.

VESTA is the Latin, and Hestia, derived from *Estia*, the Greek appellation of the glowing goddess, who is the personification of the inextinguishable fires, hidden in the centre of the terrestrial and the supernal worlds.\* To this goddess the pure, bright, igneous body known as fire, is preëminently sacred.

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\* This fire-goddess being denominated Hestia, or Vesta, is thus explained by Cicero: "Vis autem ejus ad aras et focos pertinet." Other authors make her synonymous with the earth, and thus account for her name: "Quod plantis frugibusque terra vestiatur." The Pythagoreans called the central fires of the world Vesta, Hestia, or Monas; and hence Vesta is the fire of the earth, the fire of every planetary orb, the fire of the universe: a small goddess in her restricted sphere among mankind; a supremely great divinity in respect to her vast, mundane empire. There is a remarkable coincidence of sound and meaning between the Hebrew *Asch*, the Greek *Estia* and *Hephaistos*, the Latin *Vesta*, and the German *Esse*, and *Asche*, terms which all signify fire, or are primarily associated with the idea of heat — *æstas*.

In honor of her, it is kindled upon her domestic altar, the hearth, and she requires it as the duty, while she makes it the interest of man, to guard and cherish it as the surest pledge of his weal. As this potent fire-divinity, though unseen, makes herself felt from the centre to the circumference of the earth; so by a gentle and benignant sway, she diffuses blessings and happiness from her genial hearth-fires through the human domicile. In her highest and purest attributes, Vesta is tantamount to ignis, or fire, regarded in its passivity, or recipient qualities; and she is therefore the negative pole in electricity. There is, properly speaking, but one Vesta. Considered as the mother of the gods, the children claiming her maternity as her first-born are Saturn and Rhea; but contemplated as the goddess of fire and the patroness of the vestal virgins, she is the daughter of her own children, Saturn and Rhea. This is a species of theogony which, I confess, sounds very enigmatically; and it seems as if a Samson only, with his eyes and hair all sound and fully developed, could solve it. It will appear intelligibly enough, however, if we contemplate Vesta as the *prima materia* of the world, in which case she is necessarily the mother of Saturn or time, and of Rhea — the flowing and humid: the type of the chaotic waters that covered the earth, which, in the language of Scripture, *was void and without form*. On the other hand, if we view her as the fire-goddess, she is the daughter of her divine offspring, Saturn and Rhea; or, which is the same thing, the mundane fire injected into the *prima materia* by the demiurgus, or creator of the world. Vesta glories in the flattering

title of wife of the fiery Zeus, the mighty architect of the universe, and she sympathizes *matrikos* — maternally, in the production of the universe, as Zeus does *patrikos* — paternally. Notwithstanding her maternal and connubial relations, she has preserved inviolate her virginity, though as the divinity who bears the mundane fire in her capacious womb, she is the secondary cause of all substantiality. This immaculate goddess occupied a preëminent rank among the Penates, or household deities of the Romans, who on this account conferred upon her the fond and endearing appellation of *Mater*, or mother. As her principal seat of empire among mankind, the hearth-fire was not only sacred to her, but the domestic fireside, as the family altar, or *sanctum sanctorum* of the domicile, was deemed a holy place, which secured the inestimable privileges of asylum and inviolable protection to the wretched. So deeply was she impressed with the importance of the hearth, its fires, and its benign influence on individuals and families, and so anxiously was she concerned to perpetuate them in their unimpaired integrity, that upon her solicitation her brother Jupiter, under the appropriate name of Zeus *Hephaistos*, gallantly assumed the defence of her domestic rites and institutions. With her he is therefore frequently invoked in the stipulation of family and municipal compacts. In her august name, oaths were preferably taken, and an oath pronounced in the name of Vesta, was universally esteemed the most solemn, and held to be absolutely irrevocable. As Vesta was the tutelar deity of the fireside, so she revealed herself as the efficient centre of protection to society at large, thus includ-



ing under her divine ægis, the family, the city, and the State. The bright, sacred flame that burned in honor of her name upon the city-hearth, was the municipal offering of all the private hearths, and it was fanned and nourished in an appropriate edifice, termed the Prytaneum, where in the name of the city, the magistrates known as the Prytanes, brought suitable offerings to the venerated guardian-goddess. The fire-service observed in honor of Vesta, the pyric mother, was distinguished by the name of Prytanistis. It is presumed, that for a long time the sacred fire was Vesta's only offering, though it was an ancient custom to strew green plants upon her altar: first, to manifest an especial veneration for her name; and next, to attest a proper respect for the rest of the gods. In Rome, a libation of wine was made to her as well as to Janus and the Lares. Instead of green herbs, it became the practice at a later period to scatter incense upon her altars, and at last even victims were immolated to her no less than to the other divinities. Since whatever is offered in sacrifice, springs from the earth—the *mother of all things*, warmed, invigorated, and matured by Vesta's plastic fire, the first and last oblation in all sacrificial rites, and the introductory and concluding prayer in every act of worship, were preferred to her as a mark of peculiar distinction, and the pleasing evidence of an unwavering confidence. In the temple of Vesta at Rome, was deposited the celebrated Palladium, or statue of Pallas, the pledge of the safety and perpetuity of the empire. In the most remote periods of Vesta-worship, the bread of the people it is stated was prepared in her temples,

while to the vestals the care of the public fountains was intrusted. Fire, water, and bread under the supervision of these fire-priestesses, are significant facts! Fire, the active, generative principle in nature; water, the passive recipient—the mater—Vesta, both uniting, procreate or produce food—bread, for man! The annual festival of Vesta in Rome, occurred in the glowing month of June, and was accompanied by a procession in which the ass, usually appropriated to the train of Cybele, figured, either on account of some pyric quality, or because, as mythic record informs us, he once rendered important service to the goddess. It is proper to remark, that there is considerable identity in the significance, the functions, and the character of Vesta and many of the other goddesses, especially Mitra and Minerva, and that such must necessarily be the case, as they are all more or less, though under different appellations and diversified rites, the personifications of the passive, and the containers of the active, principles of creation. Flourishing in the full majesty of a superior divinity, Vesta appears in a long, flowing robe, with a veil over her face, a floral crown upon her head, a lamp in one hand, and a javelin, a palladium, or a drum, the latter a symbol of the boisterous winds in the bosom of the earth, in the other. The mythic history of Vesta is comparatively circumscribed. Besides, she cannot boast of a great many symbols, while her temples are small, inornate structures. The temples of Vesta were of a round form—to represent the figure of the earth, say some; while others are of opinion that this rotund style of architecture denoted the

centre of the universe, as the supreme seat of sway of the fervid goddess. Plutarch, writing upon this subject, thus expresses himself: "It is also said that Numa built the temple of *Vesta* where the perpetual fire was to be kept, in an orbicular form, not intending to represent the figure of the earth, as if that was meant by *Vesta*, but the frame of the universe, in the centre of which the Pythagoreans place the element of fire, and give it the name of *Vesta* and Unity. The earth they suppose not to be without motion, nor situated in the centre of the world, but to make its revolution round the sphere of fire, being neither one of the most valuable nor principal parts of the great machine. Plato, too, in his old age, is reported to have been of the same opinion, assigning the earth a different situation from the centre, and leaving that as the place of honor, to a nobler element." \*

The statues of *Vesta* before which the devout Romans daily sacrificed to the goddess, were placed before the doors of their houses, and these consecrated places of *Vesta*-worship were called *vestibula*, from the name of the divinity to whose service they were sacred. Like *Athena*, *Vesta* was *admata*, en-

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\* In two notes on this passage, Langhorne, the translator of Plutarch, admits, first, that it was the opinion of Philolauas and other Pythagoreans, that the element of fire was placed in the centre of the universe, but insists that according to Diogenes Laertius, Pythagoras himself held the earth to be the centre. Secondly, he says, "Dionysius of Halicarnassus, L. ii., is of opinion, and probably he is right, that Numa did build the temple of *Vesta* in a round form, to represent the figure of the earth, for by *Vesta* they meant the earth."

joying perpetual juvenility, and therefore to her as well as to the former, the yearly heifer denominated *juvenca*, was dedicated. Vesta, we are told by Porphyrius, had statues in Greece which proclaimed her to her tasteful votaries in the charming attributes of a fair virgin; but as she contained within her the principles of fructification, the primordial fire, lodged in her as the impregnated mundane mother, she was represented with dependent mammæ. She appears, too, on coins, having the back part of the head veiled, a key, or the palladium, in one hand, and a wand in the other. Sometimes the inscription of the venerable title *Vesta-Mater*, accompanies these numismatico-hieroglyphical devices. An impression of a coin, procured by the archæological Spanheim, exhibits the fire-goddess sitting in a little temple, while an altar before her sends forth a bright flame, which is assiduously nourished and regulated by the officiating Vestals. A sceptre mounted by a cross, is also one of Vesta's symbols, and the undoubted evidence of her supreme authority and queenly dignity.

The Platonic philosophers graduated their ideas of Vesta to a truly Kantian transcendentalism. In his theory of the earth, Plotinus assumes the position that Vesta is the intelligence, the soul or *nous* of the earth, and Demeter the spirit. Proclus, in his commentary on the *Cratylus* of Plato, compares Vesta with Chthonia; that is, Terra or Hera: the same as Demeter or Ceres, and signifying the earth, and says that in the work of creation, she supplies the principles of fixation, or the indissoluble reality of things; while Chthonia, in her primordial or chaotic

state, it is presumed contributes as her share the conditions of form and the laws of affinity.\* The same philosophers assert that the planetary world is indebted to Vesta for its permanent positions, its unalterable motions, and its fixed poles and centres. According to these doctrines of natural philosophy, Vesta is not an entity, but an abstraction. I add, in conclusion, that in relation to the earth, Vesta personates its fires, and is the body in which they reside; and that therefore she is both Vesta and Demeter, both fire and earth. This fire is the masculine element of creation, communicated to her keeping as the wife of Zeus, the demiurgus or architect of the universe.

The immaculate priestesses of Vesta, known as the Vestal virgins, next claim our attention. The introduction of the sacred and perpetual fire at Rome, is traced back by some authors to the martial founder of Rome; by others, to Numa Pompilius, his pious and illustrious successor. It is certain that prior to either of these dates Vestal virgins existed at Alba, and that the mother of Romulus was one of their number. Perpetual fires burned upon the altars of many of the nations of antiquity, among whom we may enumerate the Hindoos, the

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\* Chthonia, strictly speaking, denotes the earth in its chaotic state. Here or Hera, signifying *Herrin*, or mistress, is one of the titles of Juno; but *Herē* or *Era*, in Greek, means also the earth, and is therefore synonymous with Chthonia; with the *Airtha* of the ancient Goths; the Anglo-Saxon *Eorthe*, *Ertha*, *Hertha*; the German *Erde*; the English *earth*; the Danish *Jord*, etc. Agreeably to the Latin orthography, Tacitus resolved these Teutonic synonyms into *Herthus*, the Frigga of the Scandinavians.



Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans. They were derived from the pure flames of the Vestal lamps, which in Rome, were earthen vessels suspended in the air.\* In Rome virgins only, in Greece, also, chaste widows, passed the age of childbearing, could aspire or deserve to be ranked among the distinguished officiants of Vesta. In respect to the former, we are expressly told that it was required of them that they should be of a good family, and without blemish or deformity in any part of their bodies. For the space of thirty years they had to observe the most rigid continence. The first decade of this prescribed term of service, they spent in learning the duties of the order; the second was employed in discharging them with a suitable decorum and sanctity; and the last they devoted to the instruction of those who had entered the novitiate. At the expiration of thirty years, they were permitted to marry, but if they still preferred celibacy, they ended their days in ministering to the rest of the Vestals. Few of the Vestals could be accused or proved guilty of the crime of violated chastity, and during the period of more than one thousand years, which marked the ample limits of their existence — from the reign of Numa to that of

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\* Doctor Ward mentions a fire-god of the Hindoos, whom he calls *Ungee*. After having described the personal appearance of this refulgent divinity, to whom belong *a thousand streams of glory* issuing from his body, and *seven tongues of flame*, he adds: "Ungee has neither temples nor images consecrated to him; but he has a service in the daily ceremonies of the Bramhuns; and one class of his worshippers, called *Sagniku Bramhuns*, preserve *perpetual fire*, like the vestal virgins."



Theodosius the Great, who dared to extinguish the celestial fire of Vesta, and to abolish the venerable and hallowed Vestal institution, only *eighteen* were proved faithless to their vows, and unworthy of their exalted vocation. At first only two virgins, named Gegania and Verania, were consecrated by Numa to the Vesta-service. Subsequently Canuleia and Tarpeia were clothed with the Vestal functions; and finally Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome, still further increased the order by the addition of two more candidates. This number, writes Plutarch, has continued to the present time. The *pontifex maximus*, the illustrious and powerful chief of all the sacerdotal orders, and the interpreter and controller of all sacred rites, had the supervision of the Vestal priestesses. "If it happens, the sacred fire, by any accident to be put out," writes the author just referred to, "as the sacred lamp is said to have been at Athens, under the tyranny of Aristion; at Delphi, when the temple was burned by the Medes; and at Rome, in the Mithridatic war, as also in the civil war, when not only the fire was extinguished, but the altar overturned: it is not to be lighted again from another fire, but new fire is to be gained by drawing a pure and unpolluted flame from the sunbeams.\* They kindled it generally with concave

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\* "If by any chance the sacred fire was extinguished," writes Tooke, "all public and private business was interrupted, and a vacation proclaimed till they had expiated the unhappy prodigy with incredible pains; and if it appeared that the virgins were the occasion of its going out, by carelessness, they were severely punished, and sometimes with rods."

vessels of brass, formed by the conic section of a rectangled triangle, whose lines from the circumference meet in one central point, etc.”\* The privileges which the Vestals enjoyed, and the penalties which they were liable to suffer, are thus described by Tooke and Plutarch: “For smaller offences these virgins were punished with stripes; and sometimes the *pontifex maximus* gave them the discipline naked, in some dark place, and under the cover of a veil; but she that broke her vow of chastity was buried alive by the Colline gate. In recompense for the rigorous discipline to which they were subject, the Vestals enjoyed extraordinary privileges and respect. When they went abroad, they had the *fascēs* carried before them,† and if by accident, they met a person led to execution, his life was granted him.‡ They had the most honorable seat at games and festivals, and the consuls and magistrates gave way whenever they met them. They were permitted to make a will during their father’s life, and to transact their private affairs without a guardian, like the mothers of three children, etc.”

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\* Though it should continue to burn with undiminished brightness, every year, on the calends of March, the Vestals invariably renewed the sacred fire from the solar rays. — G.

† This distinguished honor, the Triumvirate conferred upon them in the year of Rome seven hundred and twelve. — G.

‡ Plutarch states that in order that the meeting might end in so happy a result in respect to the convict, the Vestals had to make oath that it had been *really* accidental. This statement militates against the simple facts of the case, as both the *Vestals* and the priests of Jupiter were *universally* believed without the solemnity of an oath.

## CHAPTER II.

## ZEUS, OR JUPITER.

PHILOLOGISTS derive the name of Zeus from *Deus*, which, with the hissing *sigma* as a prefix, has been changed to *Sdeus*, of which Zeus and Theos were formed. Zeus, Zan, Zen, are the homogeneous appellations under which the Æolians, the Dorians, and the Ionians, in the order here enumerated, respectively recognized and adored the Supreme Being. The name Zeus, according to Kanne, denotes *father of the air*; but it may be more strictly defined to be ether, or the glowing, generative air itself, and derived from *zeō*, to be warm or hot. In the second book of his *Georgica*, Virgil, the prince of the Latin poets, calls Jupiter *pater omnipotens æther*, and describes the ethereal god as descending in fructifying showers into the lap of his longing spouse, Juno, or the earth, when the *Magnus* — the great god Æther, uniting himself with the great, tellurian body of the goddess, nourishes all her offspring. Considering its absolute importance to the existence and well-being of all the organic forms of creation, it may be observed that the poets indulged the exuberance of their fancy with admirable propriety in personifying ether under the name and with the attributes of a god.\* If, in addition to these facts,

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\* Anaxagoras of Clazomenia, the author of the *Homoimerian* system of philosophy, taught that the elements of all things have their source in illimitable ether; and that there they are gener-

Zeus is still further synonymous with *Theos*, deduced from *theo*, to put, constitute, ordain, Jupiter stands before us as the demiurgus and governor of the world; and if thus both *zeo* and *theo* unite in forming the ample basis of his divine significance, he is *e pluribus unum*, and therefore the greater god.\* The name Zeus is correlative with Jove or Jupiter; but the popular and the sacerdotal ideas of the god differ so materially that the subject requires two separate treatises.

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ated or evolved in consequence of the variation of temperature, produced by the laws of condensation or rarefaction. This god, too, was ethereal, or Zeus-like; infinite, the supreme, supermundane *Nous*; and the demiurgus of the universe.

\* This god is evidently also called Zeus because he gives life to all — *tozēn*. The name *Dis*, from *dia*, he likewise bears; for through him every thing exists. It is interesting, and perhaps not un instructive, to trace the cognate terms, or, more properly speaking, the same terms varied by national orthography, relating to a principal or the supreme God of some of the ancient nations. Thus Zeus, Sdeus, Theos, Dis, as we have seen, import deity, or god, and all designate the Hellenic Jove or Jupiter. This striking similarity and application of deistic names will still further appear from the following notice on this subject, in the article on Mythology, contained in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia. "If we are not mistaken," writes the author, "the appellation Thaautus, Thut, Thoth, has been transmitted through the ancient languages down to modern times; and may be traced in the *Theos* of the Greek, the *Deus* of the Romans, the German *Theut* or *Teut*, the French *Dieu*, and the English *Deity*."

## PARAGRAPH I.

*The Zeus, or Jupiter of the people.*

The popular creed of the ancient Greeks, celebrates Zeus under the threefold epithet of the Arcadian, the Dodonæan, and the Cretansian; and the vulgar contemplation of the god has, in some instances, so vitiated his divinity, as to confound it with humanity, leaving it doubtful to the historian whether in Zeus he is to record the character and exploits of a hero or of a god. Gradual development is a distinguishing trait of the human mind, and the various stages of the religious culture of the ancients, from the dim, crude notions of barbarians to the metaphysical abstractions of the priests and philosophers, are strikingly illustrated in the dogmas of their national divinities, especially in that of Zeus and Athena-Minerva among the Greeks. In the picture which is here attempted to be drawn of the Arcadian Jupiter, the primitive Pelasgic god is still plainly recognized, and his ritual service, strongly tinged and vividly colored by the pastoral simplicity and rude manners of his votaries, is eminently significant of the physical features of that wild and rugged country: it is the Jupiter *Akrios*, the god of the heights and of the mountains; the tutelar divinity of nomades and hunters.

At a remote period of antiquity, a colony from Egypt or Phœnicia immigrated into that part of the Grecian Peloponnesus known as Arcadia — thus named, as mythic history informs us, after Arcas, the son of Jupiter, and introduced among its inhab-



itants a higher state of civilization, and more refined conceptions of religion and of the gods. The Arcadian Jupiter was qualified by the epithet *Lycæus*, which has a hieroglyphical origin and import, and its elucidation is therefore to be sought in the Egyptian symbology of the god. Among the contemplative people of the Nile, the wolf was one of the symbols of light, and as such it appears upon the mummy-covers as the *psycha-pompus* or conductor of the departed souls, and as the sacred emblem both of Osiris, the lord of the dead, and of Horus, the fair and resplendent god of light.

Jupiter *Lycæus* presents himself in connection with a personage who bears a name similar to his own — *Lycaon*, the son of Pelasgus, and king of Arcadia, who, as it appears from Pausanias, polluted the altar of Zeus with the blood of a child, and whose merited punishment on account of so heinous a deed, was his conversion into a *wolf* by the justly offended god. From the date of this tragic event, a rumor was rife that the eating of human flesh inevitably resulted in a like metamorphosis. Wide spread vestiges of a primeval popular creed, mixed up with significant names, indicative of a close connection with the wolf, and interspersed with reminiscences of annual pastoral festivals, frequently obtrude themselves upon the attention at this stage of our investigations of the mythic history of Jupiter. "If I may be allowed so to express myself," writes Creuzer, "the primary idea of this species of religious faith oscillates between the dog and the wolf — *entre chien et loup*; that is, the pastoral anniversary celebrations already noticed, were



festivals observed at that season of the year when light emerges from darkness, or vernal festivals, during which the year was depurated or cleansed of its winter pollutions, and the guilt of moral defilement expiated. They were essentially festivals of purgation, upon which the ancient Pelasgians and Arcadians as well as the Romans, passed through a conversion from darkness to light. In short, in the mild light of spring, when the stern influences of winter began to abate, the sins of the old year and of the past life generally were sought to be obliterated by atonement. It was then that the wolf, as the natural enemy of the flock, was contrasted both in symbol and in song, with the dog, its friend and protector; and that the brutal practice of the savage and wolflike people, who hesitated not to offer human sacrifices, was publicly reprobated as a warning to those rude and uncultivated minds, whose animal propensities might prompt them to commit so glaring an outrage. Zeus could contemplate the *wolfish* practice of immolating human victims with abhorrence only; and hence he and his priests were the restrainers of the malignant wolf—the *Lukóergoi* or *Luperci*.\*

This wolf-god, wolf-Osiris, wolf-Horus, the *Lukoergos*, is now Zeus-Akrios, or, which is the same thing, Jupiter is Ammon; that is, Jupiter clothed in the semblance of the ram, is contemplated as occu-

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\* The Lupercalian festival of the ancient Romans, annually observed on the fifteenth of February, at the foot of Mount Aventine, and sacred to Pan or Jupiter, had its origin in this cycle of religious ideas and festive rites.—G.

pying the summits of the mountains and of the heavens, and as the god of light and of the herds. Considered in this point of view, Jupiter, the more developed and perfect Pan, still shares the fate and participates the honors of Pan, his plebeian original, and is accordingly grouped with him agreeably to the laws or the whim of hieroglyphical composition. As late as the second century, Pausanius traced the existence of hieroglyphical devices, designed to symbolize Pan or Zeus-Lycäus. At Megalopolis he saw upon a tablet the representations of a number of Arcadian nymphs; as, Nais bearing the infant Zeus upon her bosom; Anthracia, who held a torch; and Agno, who bore a water-jug in one hand and a vase in the other. Two other nymphs, Archiroë and Myrtoessa, figured in the scene, carrying vessels in their hands from which flowed streams of limpid water. In another temple, the curious historian saw the Polycletian Zeus, the Zeus *Philios*, or the friendly, who exactly resembled Bacchus with high buskins; the wine-cup in one hand, and the thyrsus, upon which perched an eagle, in the other. But for the fact that the *bird of heaven* constituted one of the symbols of the god, Pausanius declares he should have taken Zeus to be Dionysus or Bacchus: a perplexity which must naturally spring up in the minds of those who are not acquainted with the fact that Zeus and Bacchus stood related to each other as sire and son! The nymphian tableau just noticed, in which Zeus appears lying in the bosom of Nais, Anthracia — *the dark*, bearing a torch before him, while Agno carries after him the lustral water, the expressive symbol of the Lycäic

initiation and consecration, is of hieroglyphical import, and shows that beside the rude modes of worship once prevalent in the country of the Pelasgi, also a purer form of religion existed; that mysteries had been founded there at an early period of its history, in which purification by means of fire and water was sought to be accomplished; and that, the aspirants of a nobler and holier life being thus prepared to renew their career under more genial auspices, a solemn anointing and a new dedication took place in the name of *the god of the heights* — Jupiter Ammon, who sent down lightning from heaven; fructified the earth; and was everywhere active, under the compound appellations of Zeus-Dionysus, Zeus-Philios — the friendly, and Zeus-Meilichios — the expiating. Hence we have here a Phoenico-Egyptian *metathesis*, and both Zeus with the ram's horns, or Jupiter-Ammon, and Horus or Osiris, are reflected from this symbolical design; and Zeus, conformably to the soaring genius of this mythic creation, commends himself to our attention as the son of the celestial light — *Cæli* or *Ætheris filius*. The idea involved in Zeus, or Jupiter, thus portrayed, is that of universal nature resolved into the active, cosmic principles in the air, earth, water, light, and fire. Besides, the representation of the god, as delineated and grouped by the nascent, artistic skill of the Arcadians, or rather their priests, who, if they did not execute the design, at least devised and superintended it, premises a state of religion anterior to Homer; and hence the symbolical tableaux, described by the Greek historian, and here passed in review before us — implying incipient, or at any

rate, imperfect theological ideas and inferior efforts of the hieroglyphical art, betray earlier stages of civilization, while they display the bright dawn of promise in religious development. Two gods, Zeus and Dionysus, are still united in one person or reciprocate identity. It was only after Homer and Hesiod had defined the rank and described the functions of the numerous corps of illustrious inhabitants of Olympus, that their personalities stood out in bold relief; and then, too, it was that Zeus, and Dionysus — Bacchus, were separated into two distinct divinities, and poetically as well as logically contrasted.

The Dodonæan Jupiter derived his cognomen from Dodona, a town of Thesprotia, in Epirus or Thessaly, in the vicinity of which was a celebrated oracle that illustrated the name and perpetuated the power of the god. We have already noticed the account which Herodotus has given of the foundation and importance of this renowned institution.

Treating of the intention of Ulysses to consult the Dodonæan oracle in respect to the best means and most suitable style of his return to Ithaca, Homer thus expresses himself in relation to this ancient seat of inspired wisdom:—

“Meantime he voyaged to explore the will  
Of Jove on high Dodona’s holy hill,  
What means might best his safe return avail,  
To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail.”

In the sixteenth book of the *Iliad*, the *blind poet* gives a more prolix and graphic description of the oracular god, his abode, his media of communica-

tion, and his ministers. The son of Peleus and Thetis — Achilles, the bravest of his martial compeers, thus prays in behalf of his friend Patroclus: —

“ O thou supreme ! high-throned all height above !  
O great Pelasgic, Dodonæan Jove !  
Who 'midst surrounding frosts and vapors chill,  
Presid'st on bleak Dodona's vocal hill ;  
Whose groves the Selli, race austere ! surround,  
Their feet unwashed, their slumbers on the ground ;  
Who hear, from rustling oaks, thy dark decrees,  
And catch the fates, low whispered in the breeze.” \*

From the concluding passage of the immortal poet, we learn that the priests of the Dodonæan Jupiter were called Selli, from *Selloi*, 'Elloi, a gentile noun, which defines and honors them as *the* priest of the Hellenic people. The manner in which Jupiter communicated his oracles, gives us a key to the ideas which the Pelasgic tribes had of the great god of nature. As Jupiter gave oracles by means of the oak, so the oaken crown was deemed a fit ornament to deck the majestic brow of the god, contemplated as Polieus, the king of the city. The origin of the oaken crown, as a symbol of Jupiter, is attributed by Plutarch to the admirable qualities of the oak. “ It is the oak,” says he, “ which, among the wild trees, bears the finest fruit, and which, among those that are cultivated, is the strongest. Its fruit has been used as food, and the honey-dew of its leaves drunk as mead. This sweet secretion of the oak was personified under the name of a nymph, denominated Melissa. Meat, too, is indi-

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\* Pope.



rectly furnished, in supplying nourishment to ruminant and other quadrupeds suitable for diet, and in yielding birdlime, with which the feathered tribes are secured, etc.”

The esculent properties of the fruit of some trees; as, the *quercus esculus*, and the many useful qualities of their timber, may well entitle them to the rank of *trees of life*, and to the distinction and veneration of suppliers of the first food for the simple wants of man. Hence, on account of its valuable frugiferous productions, recognized as the *mast*, the beech is generically known as the *fagus*, a term which is derived from *phagein*, to eat. There was a period in the history of mankind, when the fruit of the oak, the neatly incased acorn, constituted the chief means of subsistence; and the Chaonian oaks of the Pelasgic age, have been justly immortalized on account of their alimentary virtues. It was then, according to Greek authors, that the noble oak was cherished and celebrated as the mother and nurse of man. For these reasons, Jupiter, the munificent source of so great a blessing, was adored as the benignant foster-father of the Pelasgic race, and denominated *Phegonäus*. In the blissful and hallowed oak-tree, according to the puerile notions of those illiterate people, *dwelled* the food-dispensing god. The ominous rustling of its leaves, the mysterious notes of the feathered songsters among its branches, announced the presence of the divinity to his astonished and admiring votaries, and gave hints and encouragement to those whose interest or curiosity prompted them to consult the oracle. For this reason odoriferous fumes of incense



were offered to the oracling god, under the Dodonæan oak: a species of devotion most zealously observed by the Druids in the oak-groves and forests of the ancient Gauls and Britons.

Circular dances, the archetype of the waltz, were also performed in honor of the marvellous tree, and its indwelling deity. At Athens, Jupiter was represented as the father of three warders or proctors — *Anakes*, the etymon of which we trace in *Anax*, a king. These illustrious scions of divinity, it is affirmed, he begat with the goddess Proserpine. The one of them mythology celebrates under the name of Eubuleus, the good counsellor; the other, under that of Dionysus, an appellation which is derived from *Diós* and *Nussai* — Zeus' trees; and the third, under that of Zagreus. In other words, Zeus, the fountain of life in the earth, associated himself with the fluid element of generation — Proserpine-Dione, and begot both the inspiriting mists or exhalations emanating from the earth, and the diversified and vigorous life of herbs and trees. Dionysus, the soft and flowing, is Jupiter in his attribute of physical generator, flowing or descending in the meteoric phenomena of rain and dew, upon the plytonic productions of the earth, especially the trees. Or, to be as explicit as an abstruse theme will admit, Zeus, the life of the earth and of the atmosphere, reveals himself in the earth oracularly, as Eubuleus; upon the earth, as the strength of the oak; and in the fulness of exuberant abundance, as Dionysus. The aqueous vapors which, in the form of dews and rains, exhale from the surface of water and the various organic bodies which exist upon the

earth, communicate food, health, and increase to the trees, and by this means — personified as Dionysus, the son of Jupiter, they afford shelter and protection to the *tongues of the gods* — the feathered choristers of the air. Behold the primitive cradle and the lisping infancy of the physico-religious creed of the ancient Greeks and Romans!\* From the singular fact that Jupiter gave oracles by means of the language of birds, he had the honor to be surnamed *Picus*, or the woodpecker, among the Latins. The intimate relation which subsisted between Jupiter-Dodonæus and birds and trees, may be learned from the circumstance that by a symbolical representation of the ancients, the god appears placed between two trees, among the branches of which the cooing dove has taken up its abode.

At Ammonium, in Lybia, Jupiter figured under the form of a ram, and was known as Jupiter-Ammon, while at Dodona, he assumed the semblance of an ox, or taurus. One of the reasons why this god imitated the taurian type at the latter place, was, that during his early Pelasgic reign, he was so

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\* The formation of clouds, the phenomena of rain, and the precipitation of moisture, are owing to the variableness of the state of heat and electricity of the atmosphere, "in consequence of which," writes Professor Kidd in his *Bridgewater Treatise*, "a given mass of air is incapable of retaining, in solution or suspension, the same quantity of moisture which it did before; and hence that moisture is precipitated in the form of dews and fogs; or being previously condensed into accumulated masses of clouds, is discharged from those clouds in the form of rain." Thus Jupiter-Dionysus still lives, and is still the basis of this branch of physical science; but how different in form is the ancient from the modern divinity!

vaguely defined as frequently to be confounded with Dionysus, and because his worshippers seem to have been partial to this useful animal as a symbolical medium, as it appeared from the fact that they adored their holy river Acheolus as a god with the attributes of taurus.\*

In Egypt, we are told, Amun, or Jupiter-Ammon — Jupiter the *Sandy*, begat Osiris, the taurian god; that is, the sun in Taurus is the personified emanation of the sun, popularly considered as a god, in Aries.

As Moloch, Jupiter came from Phœnicia to Crete; and the Phœnicians, who, according to Herodotus, had sold the first Dodonæan priestess to the Epi-rians, could introduce there with equal facility a Jupiter under the taurian form; that is, as Moloch, or the son of Jupiter Ammon, or as Jupiter-Ammon the father, in the symbolical garb of the ram.

In respect to Jupiter, the primitive faith of the Cretans did not differ essentially from that of the Arcadians and Dodonæans, already made the subject of investigation. They indulged the flattering conviction that their romantically beautiful island, with its rugged cliffs and fertile valleys, its hundred cities and its god-mountain — Ida, embodied in an eminent degree the living, active principles of nature which, regarded as the masculine elements of crea-

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\* The true or primary reason why the ram, the ox, etc., was employed as a symbol of Jupiter-Dionysus, etc., is to be sought in the zodiac, or the solar year of the ancients; and hence Jupiter in the guise of a ram, is the sun in Aries, and Jupiter in the similitude of an ox, or rather bull, is Dionysus or the sun in Taurus, etc.

tion, they eagerly personified and piously recognized under the awe-inspiring name of Zeus.\*

Crete was the primeval seat of Phœnician and Egyptian colonists, as is evident, among other proofs, from its labyrinths, its grotto-temples, and its taurian idols. This combination of Phœnicio-Egyptian religious ideas, necessarily resulted in the production of a class of deities such as we here contemplate.

The first in the theogonic catalogue that claims our attention and elicits our respect, is Uranus—heaven, who is succeeded by Chronos—time. The latter begat Zeus with Rhea, who is the same as Tethys, the flowing, humid element in cosmic productions, and Zeus, in his turn, gave existence to Dictynna. This system of physico-theology continued to be the predominant one in the greater part of Greece, whence it happened that the Greek religion was justly regarded as being of Cretansian origin; while the Dodonæan system reigned triumphantly in the north-western portions of the Grecian peninsula, and the adjacent Italian States. I add, that the radical element of the whole Jupiterian religion, was primarily and essentially *sabaistic* in its nature, though in its popular, old Pelasgic as well as Cretansian, and Phœnico-Egyptian forms, it was mainly the sustaining and lifegiving principle of the earth, considered as a cosmic organization.

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\* Mythology proclaims the interesting fact that Jupiter was educated on Mount Ida, by the Corybantes, or priests of Cybele, who on that account, were denominated *Idæi*. The Cretans also boasted that they could show the tomb of their god: Jupiter as sun-god in the zodiacal sign of Scorpio!

The recognition and worship of the sun, moon, and stars, as divinities, or rather, as the resplendent symbols of Divine majesty, constituted its broad and glittering basis. From time immemorial, Jupiter was contemplated by his better informed heathen adorers, as the sun with the symbolical attributes of taurus, or as Jupiter-Moloch; and his graceful daughter Dictynna, whose name is derived from *dikein*—to emit rays, as the moon, who appears now as Britomartis, or the charming virgin, then as Pasiphaë, or the all-illuminating, and lastly as Artemis, or Diana. The Cretansian Dictynna wore a verdant crown, wreathed, by her fond admirers, of the magic plant *diktamnon*, which ancient authors affirm grew only in the island of Crete, now Candia; and this cranial embellishment symbolically distinguished the resplendent daughter of Jove, both as Luna, or the goddess of the moon, and as Ilithyia, or the divinity presiding over midwifery. For this potent plant was deemed to be especially efficacious in the labors of childbirth, as well as in all female diseases. Hence little children, the gift of the divine midwife Dictynna-Ilithyia and of the marvellous *diktamnon*, figured among hieroglyphical devices, and attested the profound gratitude of her votaries for her Æsculapian services.

## PARAGRAPH II.

*The Zeus, or the Jupiter of the priests.*

The august being whom the ancients, especially the Greeks, designated as *Pater-Deus*—god the



father, was gradually developed from the crude notions and vaguely defined dogmas of faith, a notice of which we have communicated in the preceding paragraph. In his palmiest days, from the age of Alexander the Greek to the ascendancy of Christianity, this supreme being, still denominated Zeus or Jupiter, assumed an influence and a fame among mankind, which was coextensive with the almost universal monarchies of the Greeks and the Romans. The creed of the heathens relating to their Pater-Deus, is to be ascertained by an investigation of their literary and plastic productions. According to the epic poet Ennius, the firmament was called Jupiter:—

“Adspice hoc sublime candens, quem invocant Jovem:”

behold this shining firmament on high! they invoke it as Jupiter. A designation of the god like this, evidently implies both a *synecdoche*, by which a part is taken for the whole, and a *metonymy*, in which the effect is put for the cause. In the same hyperbolical style, Horace, in his first Ode, impiously stigmatizes the god as the *frigid Jove*; an epithet which is borrowed from *Hibernice*, one of the cognomens of this deity, signifying his dominion during the winter season. The two remaining seasons of the ancient year, spring and summer, were respectively denominated the vernal and the æstival Jupiter. With the same metaphorical inaccuracy, the poet last quoted describes Jupiter as *malus*, in allusion to his boreal manifestations in nature; while Virgil, in the second book of his *Georgica*, availing himself of the license common to his profession,



makes this god and the air or weather, considered as detrimental to the ripe grapes, synonymous: —

“Et jam maturis metuendus Jupiter uvis.”

The sum of all these indefinite figurative expressions resolves itself into the following thesis: The ancients acknowledged Jupiter as the god of the three seasons, which in that age embraced the annual cycle of time, and hesitated not to personify these seasons, each one of which they designated as Jupiter, while at the same time, in his totality, he was the god of the year; and they accordingly adored him as the grand embodiment of all the meteorological and astronomical phenomena of the heavens. Thus he was called *Lucetius* by the people of Campania, and *Diespiter* by the Latins, “because,” says Tooke, “he cheers and comforts us with the light of day, as much as with life itself, or because he was believed to be the father of light.” *Pluvius*, too, was one of his appellations, not because he and rain implied the same thing, but because he gives rain. The surname of *Capitolinus* conferred upon the god, was surely never meant to convey the idea that the Romans worshipped the hill bearing that name as Jupiter, but the deity to whom the temple, situated upon that renowned eminence, was dedicated. When, on a certain occasion, this god had brought the fleeing, panic-struck Romans to a stand, and was therefore honored with the title of *Stator*, he and the reassured warriors could not be contemplated as one, even by the indulgence of the most extravagant figure of speech, but as two distinct forms of existence, though there had been a

time, and among the vulgar that time might still exist to some extent, when the gods and the various parts of creation were deemed to be synonymous.

Jupiter had the honor to be glorified by the earliest efforts of sculpture, and Pausanias informs us that at Larissa there was an image of the god which was distinguished by three eyes, two in the usual position, and one in the forehead. The presumption is, that it denoted the Jupiter *Patrōos* of Priamus, the last king of Troy: the paternal or ancestral god, who still graciously regards the descendants of his ancient votaries, and to whom he will extend his protective care to remotest time. When the trophy of the Trojan conquest was divided, this primitive specimen of the iconic art fell to the lot of Sthenelus, the son of Capaneus, who conveyed it to the above-mentioned Thessalian city. It is presumed that the three visual organs of the god denoted his three principal relations to the universe, defined as the supernal, the subterranean, and the maritimal, and deistically distinguished as Jupiter the supreme god, in his celestial, Plutonian, and Neptunian attributes and manifestations. In a similar style, the Platonic philosopher Proclus speaks of a demiurgic *trias* of this god, under the name of three persons, the first of whom was designated as *Zeus par excellence*, who was the same as Zeus the father; the second, as *Zeus Poseidon*—the power or *duamis*; and the third as Pluto—the spirit, or *nous*. This Hellenic trinity dwindled into oblivion after the art of sculpture among the Greeks had succeeded, through the creative genius of Phidias, to produce the Olympian Jupiter, as the omnipotent, pan-Hel-

lenic King, when the god had no longer an equal or a divided divinity, but was emphatically the God of gods, as well as the sole source of universal being. Another statue of Zeus, at Olympia, the masterly production of the chisel of Aristonous of Ægina, presented by the Metapontines as a votive offering to the god, serves still further to illustrate the character and determine the functions of the Pater-Deus. This Aristonic Jupiter is represented with the face averted towards the east, with an eagle perched upon one hand, and lightning grasped in the other, while a garland of vernal flowers decorated the awful brow of the supreme majesty: it is, as Juvenal often calls him, the Jupiter *Vernus*; and this fact is corroborative of the position already advanced, that the Zeus *Patrōos* at Larissa, endowed with the supernumerary eye, imported the three seasons of the year, as well as the three cosmic relations before noticed. Such were some of the earlier attempts of the complicated and abstruse science of symbology, still in a state of development, to give expression to religious impressions, and to represent under suitable forms, the innate or empirical conviction of the existence and providence of a Supreme Being. They originated in an age when polytheism had not yet been reduced into a regular and harmonious system under the magic effusions of poetic genius, or the progressive development of plastic perfection. It is to be deeply regretted that so few of the hymns and prayers, which once resounded in the presence of the still somewhat uncouth Pelasgic images of the Pater-Deus, have survived the corrosion of time, or the destructive Vandalism of barbaric hordes, as they

would furnish the means of a most correct appreciation of the true character of the Zeus of the more intelligent and philosophic portion of the heathen world. As the case now stands, we can argue only according to the inferences deduced from unconnected fragments of ancient literature. A remarkable specimen of a hymnic relic has been preserved through the foresight or curiosity of Philostratus. It claims the ancient minstrel Pamphos for its author, and translated into prose, runs thus: "Most glorious Zeus, greatest of the gods, wrapped in the ordure of sheep, horses, and mules!" A pæan qualified by antitheses as glaring as these, and apparently so contradictory and absurd, is well calculated to fill the mind of the uninitiated into the mysteries of the heathen religion, with mingled feelings of surprise and disgust. With the symbologist, versed in the phraseology, and acquainted with the emblematic devices of the hieroglyphical system of theology, the case is very different. In the preceding devout yet seemingly extravagant strains of psalmody, the supreme god Zeus figures before us in the humble capacity of the *scarabæus pillularius*, in French the *fouille-merde*, wallowing in the excrementitious matter of various animals. An idea strikingly consonant to the creed of the ancient Egyptians, according to which they believed this species of scarabæus to be procured from the ordure, in which it delights to revel; and hence this insect was selected as a sacred and most significant symbol of life and palingenisia.\*

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\* The *scarabæus pillularius* is noted for its singular instinct, which directs it to lay its eggs into the dung of animals, especially

In his character of scarabæus, or, more properly speaking, under the symbol of the scarabæus, Jupiter is therefore nothing less than the fructifying and nourishing power — to *zōgonoun*, of the universe. Zeus was likewise qualified by the epithet *Apomuios*, because he had the head of a fly, which Schlichtegroll thinks was meant for the *bee*, the symbol of primeval food; while others, who are of opinion that a fly was as clearly signified as it was expressed in the symbol, consider the insect-headed god to be the same as the Beelzebub of the Ekronites, noticed in the Old Testament: the god of the flies, or rather the fly-restrainer and protector against these often very annoying and sometimes destructive insects.\*

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into that of neat-cattle, and for rolling them up into pellets formed of this feculent matter, when they are hatched by the influence of the sun; a mode of incubation or reproduction which escaped the scrutiny of the ancients, and thus corruption was regarded as the immediate source of organic existence. The scarabæus was im-  
 pictured upon the obelisks and sarcophagi of the Egyptians, and as the emblem of life and palingenisia, it was placed at the root of the nose of the embalmed mummy.

\* The Jews stigmatized Beelzebub as *the prince of the devils*, to which notion our Saviour accommodated himself in his intercourse with them, without, it is presumed, necessarily indorsing it as true. Belus, Bel, Beel, Baal, etc., are all cognate terms, and denote the sun considered as a god. Zebub signifies a fly, and hence Beelzebub, Baalzebub, etc., mean fly-god, the sun. In vain will heathen antiquities be searched to find proof that Bel, Baal, etc., and Satan or the devil, are the same! The etymological analyses given of Beelzebub by the distinguished lexicographer, Parkhurst, deserves a brief attention. "Baalzebub," says he, is mentioned 2 Kings, i. 2, 3, 16, as the *Aleim*, or God of the Philistines of Ekron. He appears by that history to have been one of their *medical* idols; and as Baal denotes *the sun*, so the attribute



In introducing a number of Orphic hymns into his Eclogues, Stobæus, a Greek writer who flourished in the fifth century, has insured immortality to at least one fragment of sacred poetry, the strains of which are at once lofty and profound: "Zeus is the first and the last; the head and the extremities: from him have proceeded all things. He became man and pure virgin—in the language of the ancients, the masculine and feminine agents of creation; is the prop of earth and heaven; the soul of all things; and the principle of mobility in fire. He is the sun and the moon; the fountain of the ocean; the demiurgus that formed the universe; one power; one god; the mighty creator and governor of the world. Every thing, fire, water, earth, ether, night, the heavens, Metis,\* the primeval architec-

*zebug* seems to import his power in causing water to *gush out* of the earth, and in promoting the *fluidity* and *due discharge* of the juices and blood in vegetables, animals, and men, and thereby continuing or restoring their *health* and *vigor*. And as *flies*, from the manner of their *issuing* from their holes, were no improper emblems of *fluids gushing forth*, hence the epithet *zebug* makes it probable that a fly was part of the imagery of the Baal at Ekron, or that a *fly* accompanied the *bull* or other image, as we see in many instances produced by Montfaucon, etc." Having informed us that Jupiter, under the name of Belus or Bel, had ultimately reigned among the Babylonians and Assyrians, as the first of all the gods, Tooke adds: "In different places and languages, he was afterwards called Beel, Baal, Beelphegor, Beelzebub, and Belzemen."

\* Metis was one of the Oceanides, and first wife of Jupiter: this divine marriage was the union of fire and water; the active principle of creation with its passive element—the *prima materia* of all things.



treasure, the beautiful Eros, Cupid, or the god of love, all is included within the vast dimensions of his glorious body." This vivid picture of Zeus, just shaded enough by the artist to relieve its fresh colors, and point out its lofty, vigorous style, reveals the god to us as the supreme, divine unity, under the sensible image of a corporeal totality, in a human-like, mundane body: the universe has assumed the form of man!

At a later period, when the Greeks had made some progress in dialectic science, they no longer manifested a willingness blindly to acquiesce in religious dogmas, however true they might be, unsupported by the evidence of reason, or rendered probable by experience and observation, and boldly demanded a logical definition of the existence and attributes of the Pater-Deus, and the proof of the nature and mode of his divine activity according to the principles of induction. Alas! too little must be yielded, where too much is demanded! The first who claimed to be heard upon this subject, were Thales and Anaxagoras, who may be regarded as the illustrious founders of the most ancient of the Ionic schools, which, however, still retained a sacerdotal character, and gave expression to its metaphysical researches in lyric strains and sacred imagery.

In prose, Pherecydes and Pythagoras led the van in doctrinal theology. The former of these philosophers understood by Zeus — Zēn, ether; that is, the external, highest, empyrean heaven, inclosing the supernal world; or the light as the concentrated

primordial element.\* This Pherecydian doctrine is cognate to the Persian of Mithras, the Egyptian of Horus, and the Hindoo of Brahma, and is derived from the same prolific and primitive source. The theory of two principles, or the dogma of good and evil, advanced by Pythagoras, the former under the name of Zeus, the *nous*, the one or *monas*—the good; and the latter under that of *duas*, or duality, as the materiate of existence and the source of evil, has a similar origin. Consulting the apathic and inflexible stoics on this interesting subject, we find that the Zeus of Chrysippus was the fountain and essence of all forms and modes of existence. Zeus is the appellation of the god—*to zēn*, because he gives life to all, and Dis, from *dia*, because through him are all things. As to the divine Plato, he portrays this divinity in brief but forcible language as the creator and governor of the world.

According to Stobæus, Porphyrius taught, in the spirit and style of the old Orphic theology, “that Zeus was the whole world; the animal of animals—*zōōn ek zōōn*; the god of gods. Moreover, that he was *nous*—the intelligence, through which he produced all things; for it was by means of ideas that he originated and formed every part of the universe.” What Chronos, or Cronos, is *potentia*, in respect to the universe, this Porphyrian Zeus is *actu*; that is, Zeus is the actualized creative power of Chronos,

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\* Zeus, it will be perceived here, is the male element, power, or principle of creation. Chthonia—the earth; Metis—the water, etc., are his consorts: chemical affinity, electrical attraction and repulsion, are the mighty agents in cosmic organization.

and hence he has very properly been described as Zeus-Chronos. "The father of Zeus," writes Kaiser, "was defined as time, or Chronos, according to a more recent system of theogony, because he reigned prior to his great son, though as regards rank, he is inferior to him. But the fact that Zeus, the supreme deity, is not the first god in the order of time, does not affect his supremacy." I add that Zeus, considered as demiurgus and governor of the world, is Chronos, or time realized in *cosmos*. In Zeus all order of nature gravitates as in its cosmic centre. Through him, the vast body of nature, the cosmic god-man, the various parts of creation exist, and attain to unity. Viewed in this comprehensive light, especially as the *nous*, the understanding or intelligence, we are able to comprehend the nature and meaning of the goddess Athena, contemplated as the ever chaste virgin under the name of Minerva, born from the head of the god: she is the lovely personification of the wisdom of her celestial sire, and of the centralization of the unity of cosmic plurality in him.

With Juno, Zeus begat Mars, but the martial daring of this god, based upon mere brute force, could accomplish nothing that was worthy of the scion of so exalted a parentage, without the controlling and mediative wisdom of Minerva. With Semele, the impersonation of the earth, Zeus, the ether, fire, and lightning, procreated Dionysus: the plurality of existence, or nature considered in its cosmic elements and diversified forms. Semele, the fragile goddess, unable to bear the full generative influences of her puissant spouse, died, and entered

into the bleak abode of night: the organic life of the earth stagnates and dies after the autumnal equinox! The immatured son, removed from the senescent womb of the defunct mother, is carefully concealed by the anxious father, in one of his hips; that is, the seeds and properties of organic existence are preserved by the god of nature till Semele, the earth, shall again revive at the coming spring.\*

According to the Cretansian theogony, Zeus could boast the paternity of three celebrated daughters, known in poetry and the fine arts as the *Horæ*, whom he begat with *Themis*—the primordial law. The first was named *Dike*—justice; the second, *Eunomia*—the equal and harmonious execution of justice; and the third, *Eirene*, or the peace which succeeds the close of a military campaign at the end of summer. In view of this last daughter, or the Eirenic attribute of the god, he is *Moiragetes*, or supreme controller of fate. These *Horæ*, fair openers of the gates of heaven and of Olympus, have also a calendaric import, and denote the three seasons of the ancient year. Ethically interpreted, they are the antitheses of the untoward, irregular powers of nature, the enemies of all order—the Titans; for they are the harmonious, equable, nexual striving of na-

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\* The hip in which the embryo-life of Dionysus was secured, is synonymous with *loin*, a term used among the Hebrews to express the seat of the generative principle, because, it may be presumed, its efflux is most sensibly felt in that region. In the thirty-fifth chapter of Genesis, God announces to Jacob that kings *should come out of his loins*; and in the forty-sixth chapter of the same book, it is said, "All the souls which came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his *loins*, etc., were threescore and six."

ture: the founders of order; the promoters of agrarian culture; and the patrons of civilization.

The ancient Carians conferred the sturdy cognomen *Labrandeus* upon Zeus; a title which recognizes a martial divinity in its bearer, as it is derived from *labrus* — the war-axe. The reason for the existence of a Labrandean Zeus, has already been hinted at in the antagonism of the fair Horæ to the repulsive Titans, and may be still further discovered in the fact that the winter season was regarded by the ancients as an unpropitious manifestation of nature; as a belligerent demon, armed with fifty heads and a hundred hands; and personified under the appellation of Briareus, whom the god, in his capacity of Jupiter-Vernus, subdued in the spring, and thus enabled mankind to prosecute the profession of arms, or to pursue the more genial avocations of domestic industry. For Jupiter was the mighty opener of the portals of the ancient year, which, in accordance with nature, began in the spring; and as the vernal unroller of annual time, he summoned, as his votaries were prone to believe, his warlike people, and conducted them either to the blessings of peace and of plenty at home, or to the perils and the glory of the battle-field abroad. In all these relations, Jupiter was the good deity wrestling with moral and physical evil. Moreover, as Zeus-Labrandeus, he was virtually the same as Zeus *akrios* and *keraunios*, who, throned on high, from whence he hurled forth thunder and lightning; rent the clouds with his fiery bolts;\* and descended in irre-

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\* According to the personifying tendency of mythic theology,



sistible torrents of rain, or in mild, gentle, vernal showers, which dissolved and bore down with them the reluctant snows of the mountains, while they stimulated and fructified the still dormant yet awaking earth, revealing himself as Zeus *Kataibates*, and the Jupiter *pluvius*: the god that comes down from heaven, and that brings rain. In these meteorological phenomena, Zeus was metaphorically the mild, genial air or atmosphere, which generates fertility in the earth; promotes the growth and design of its productions; and secures fruitful seasons and abundant harvests to mortals. Hence the Cretans, who adored the Pater-Deus as the beneficent source of every blessing, conferred upon him those significant epithets above enumerated, and which were so admirably adapted both to illustrate

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dark, scowling, threatening clouds, borne, as the poets fancied, upon their flying storm-steeds; exhaling the fleecy mist from their foaming sides; shaking frost, snow, or hail from their frothing mouths or flowing manes, were metamorphosed into giants by the name of Titans, rising up against heaven, prepared to scale and sack the burnished and sparkling seat of empire of Jupiter, the father of gods and men, who, to prevent so calamitous an event, and to preserve that balance of power in the universe without which order and harmony must give place to anarchy and confusion, incased in a panoply of empyrean light and fire; armed with vivid lightning and the three-forked thunderbolt; and urging his electric coursers athwart the celestial vault: his eyes flashing, and his lips uttering the deep, hollow, awful peals of impending doom; he rushes upon the insolent foe, defeats and hurls him to the earth! Nevertheless, these Titan forces, led on by Briareus, are also ministrant to Jove, who *raises the storm; mingles with the wind; and is emphatically the cloud-compeller*: —

“Then Jove from Ida’s top his horrors spreads;  
The clouds burst dreadful o’er the Grecian heads.”



his goodness, and to magnify his name. As to his bearing towards the enemies of his votaries and favorites, he proved himself to be a very different god from what we have just described him to be, assuming a most appalling character: he was now *Zeus-Vindex* — the defender, and *Jupiter-Ultor* — the avenger, who sent panic terror into the ranks of the opposing foes, crushing them to the earth in the potency of his wrath and the might of his power; thus signally interposing in behalf of his people, to whom also he is the *mild*, and the *Phuxios*, who forces the presumptuous enemy who refuses to submit, to flee. *Jupiter-Liberator* was likewise one of the distinguishing appellations of the god, inasmuch as he delivered from political bondage the nations who sighed under the yoke of foreign oppression. In a higher, ethical sense, the liberating or eleutherion god, sets at liberty the body-imprisoned souls, and conducts them back from the reverses and trials of this life into their true father-land and primeval home. *Basileus* and *Pater* are titles by which Zeus used to be addressed in hymns and liturgic formulas, and they present the god to our contemplation in the new and interesting light as the ideal centre of the extensive cycle of social life. The idea of Zeus as father and king, developed itself organically from that of the father and head of the human family, and the patriarchal government was the revered type after which the administration of the *Pater-Deus* was naturally presumed to be conducted. As Burgrave and Pretor of the city, the god was designated by the titles of *Polieus* and *Poliouchos*. In short, he was the normal, hallowed

standard of all the functions and duties of the social relations, devised by the wisdom or dictated by the piety of mankind, and sanctioned by the indelible seal of time. Cities constituted the first considerable commonwealth of the human race, and even at the present day, a Pekin, a Paris, or a London, so completely embodies the organic vitality of the State, that its fate involves that of the nation, whose life-blood circulates within its capitoline limits. It was in consequence of facts like these, that in addition to his other city titles, Zeus also bore that of *Dikaspolos*, because he was the primary source and supreme administrator of all laws, from their incipient manifestations at the cradle to their complete unfolding and mature vigor in the senate-chamber or the curule chair; and from the humble hearth-stone to the towering throne of regal state. At Athens, the ancient school of the European world, and other cities, he had altars in the market-place, and responded to the name of *Agoraios*, because he guarded the faith and integrity of the people who met there for the purpose of traffic, or the transaction of civil affairs. At the transfer of real estate, both parties were obliged solemnly to swear that they would deal equitably towards each other. The oath, when taken in the name of Zeus — Apollo was also frequently invoked upon such occasions — was accompanied by an offering of incense — *thumiama*, to him as the god of the market. It was only after this impressive formality had been duly observed, that the officiating magistrate was permitted to make an entry of the sale. Senators and councillors of State were required, in order properly to discharge

their important duties, to prefer their prayers to Minerva and to Jupiter-*Boulaïos*, the adviser. The philosophers, whose wisdom had not yet taught them the pernicious lessons to ignore the claims of piety, regarded Zeus as the *summum bonum*, or primary and sole source of all that is great and good in the universe, and especially as the origin and essence of all law and justice. They were firmly persuaded that through him alone man could attain to a just appreciation of what is good and evil, or right and wrong.

According to Thucydides and other authors, among other qualifications required of an Athenian magistrate before he could be permitted to serve in a public capacity, were these: that he should be able to furnish satisfactory testimonials that he could trace his Athenian pedigree, on the father and mother's side, at least to the third generation, and that he had erected altars to Zeus-*Patrous* and Zeus-*Herceus*;\* the rights and privileges of Athenian citizenship depended absolutely upon the knowledge and the worship of the god under these attributes. Besides, the conjugal relation of Zeus and Juno, or Hera, is the fair and chaste model after which all connubial connections among mankind are to be observed. It is a holy marriage—*ieros gamos*, an immaculate consecration; and therefore Juno is qualified by the honorable epithet *Teleia*, or perfect, a distinction which implies that she is united to her spouse by a sacrament or solemn dedication. She is further de-

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\* Herceus is derived from *erkos*, the court or area of a dwelling: and Patrous denotes paternal—the god of the ancestors.

nominated *Gamelios* or *Pronuba*, the bridemaïd or bridal suitress. It was in a grotto on Mount Cithæron where, for the first time and in secret, Jupiter presumed to embrace the lovely goddess; and Juno, on account of the locality in which the incident took place, was called *Muchia*, but in allusion to the time, *Nuchia*, because it happened in the night: Juno the *nocturnal* is accordingly the same as Latona, or night. In other words, this goddess, under the name of Juno, is the earth, but under that of Latona, the night, which is, however, only another term for the shadow of the earth.

Guided by this divine example, the end of the marital institution was defined to be *ep aroto paidon gnesion*—the *aration* or cultivation of genuine offspring: children born in holy wedlock, and under the august sanction of the immortal gods, in contradistinction to illicit and meretricious productions. In the extensive nomenclature appropriated to Zeus, the appellation *Orkios* also occurs, implying that he is the overseer and executor of oaths, and as such he was represented in the senate chamber at Olympia, bearing a thunderbolt in each hand, ready to smite to the earth the impious wretch who should dare to contract the flagrant guilt of perjury. Without the devout recognition of father Zeus, the tenure of life and property in society was justly supposed to rest upon an insecure basis; without him, there was no holy tie in the domestic or the municipal relations of mankind; no true or lasting blessings; no rational or well-founded hope. He was universally acknowledged by his artless and profoundly religious votaries, to be the omnipresent

and all-controlling Penate — the household god, and divine housekeeper, who therefore claimed to be contemplated and adored as such both in families and in commonwealths. The childlike faith of the ancient Greeks taught them to believe that all the domiciliary relations and interests of the human race were under the keen supervision and gracious guardianship of the great and exalted Jupiter; that they were consequently the sacred fountains from which emanates all that is great or good, noble or precious, in human life; and that while they continued to be god-sustained and god-hallowed, human happiness should endure unimpaired, and flourish in perennial vigor. Hence Zeus-Herceus had an altar which bore his image and stood at the outer gate, opening into the court or *erkos* of the dwelling, surrounded by hedge or wall. Here, where was emphatically *holy ground*, the god kept watch and ward over the rights and duties of the family; here the inmates of the house assembled to worship their tutelar god under the endearing and encouraging name of Zeus-Herceus; and here piety, warmed and fanned by the sacred altar-fires of the domestic hearth, delighted to iterate and proclaim its undying faith in him as the *Propatōr* — the first father, and the sacred prototype of all fathers of all time. A part of an address, contained in the eighth book of Pope's Iliad, and delivered by Jupiter before the assembled deities on Mount Olympus, in which the *thunderer* threatens them with the dire pains of Tartarus in case they should presume to assist either party engaged in the Trojan contest, and which must have been eminently calculated to impress that splendid audience



with a profound sense of the surpassing power and infinite greatness of the immortal orator, will conclude our observations upon the god, who *grasps the thunder in his hands* : \* —

“ Let him who tempts me, dread those dire abodes ;  
And know, th’ Almighty is the god of gods.  
League all your forces then, ye powers above,  
Join all, and try th’ omnipotence of Jove ;  
Let down our golden everlasting chain,  
Whose strong embrace holds Heaven, and earth, and main :  
Strive all, of mortal and immortal birth,  
To drag, by this, the thunderer down to earth :  
Ye strive in vain ! If I but stretch this hand,  
I heave the gods, the ocean, and the land ;  
I fix the chain to great Olympus’ height,  
And the vast world hangs trembling in my sight !  
For such I reign, unbounded and above ;  
And such are men, and gods, compared to Jove.

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\* The influence which climate exercises upon the faith of nations, is strikingly illustrated in the fact that while Greece, Italy, Scandinavia, etc., have had their Zeus, Jupiter, and Thor, because they had the electrical phenomena of thunder and lightning, the bright, cloudless sky of Egypt never enriched and invigorated the mythology of the people of the Nile with the stern realities and refulgent majesty of a *god of thunder*.



## DIVISION III.

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### THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

THE quadrennial festival, immortalized under the name of the Olympia, or the Olympic games, received its appellation either from the town of Olympia, in Elis, at which it was celebrated, or from Jupiter Olympius, to whom it was dedicated. Mythic history ascribes the origin of the Olympic games to Hercules and Pelops, and refers to the victory obtained by the former over Augias, about twelve centuries prior to the Christian era, as the date of their introduction into Greece. How the name and labors of that god, and the majesty of this king, came to be thus genetically associated with this pan-Hellenic festival, will be explained in the sequel. After these games had been observed for some time, they were neglected, and Ephitus, aided by Lycurgus, the renowned Spartan legislator, had the honor to revive them. Once more, however, they were destined to fall into desuetude, and for the last time, they were reinstituted by Coræbus, in the year before Christ seven hundred and seventy-six.\* “A tradition pre-

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\* Gillies is of opinion that Coræbus had no hand in the institution of the Olympic games, and that his name is mentioned in

vailed," writes Gillies, "that even before the Dorian conquest, the fruitful and picturesque banks of the Alpheus, in the province of Elis, or Eleia, had been consecrated to Jupiter. It is certain that athletic sports, similar to those described by Homer at the funeral of Patroclus, had been on many occasions exhibited in Elis, by assembled chiefs, with more than ordinary solemnity. The Dorian conquerors are said to have renewed the consecration of that delightful province. But the wars which early prevailed between them and the Athenians, and the jealousies and hostilities which afterwards broke out among themselves, totally interrupted the religious ceremonies and exhibitions with which they had been accustomed to honor their common gods and heroes. Amidst the calamities which afflicted or threatened the Peloponnesus, Iphitus, a descendant of Oxylyus, to whom the province of Eleia had fallen in the general partition of the peninsula, applied to the Delphic oracle. The priests of Apollo, ever disposed to favor the views of kings and legislators, answered agreeably to his wish, that the festivals anciently celebrated at Olympia, on the Alpheus, must be renewed, and an armistice proclaimed for such States as were willing to partake of them, and desirous to avert the vengeance of heaven. Fortified by this authority, and assisted by the advice of Lycurgus, Iphitus took measures, not only for restoring the Olympic solemnity, but for rendering it

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connection with that of Ephitus, because he *won in the foot-race, when the latter, at the period designated in the text, revived these games.*

perpetual. The injunction of the oracle was speedily diffused through the remotest parts of Greece, by the numerous votaries who frequented the sacred shrine. The armistice was proclaimed in Peloponnesus, and preparations were made in Eleia for exhibiting shows and performing sacrifices. In the heroic ages, feats of bodily strength and address were destined to the honor of deceased warriors;\* hymns and sacrifices were reserved for the gods. But the flexible texture of Grecian superstition, easily confounding the expressions of respectful gratitude and pious veneration, enabled Iphitus to unite both in his new institution.

The festival, which lasted five days, began and ended with a sacrifice to Olympian Jove. The intermediate time was chiefly filled up by the gymnastic exercises, in which all freemen of Grecian extraction were invited to contend, provided they had been born in lawful wedlock, and had lived untainted by any infamous, immoral stain. The preparation for this part of the entertainment was made in the gymnasium of Elis, a spacious edifice, surrounded by a double range of pillars, with an open area in the middle. Adjoining were various apartments, containing baths and other conveniences for the combatants. The neighboring country was gradually adorned with porticos, shady walks and groves, interspersed with seats and benches, the whole originally destined to relieve the fatigues and

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\* This assertion of the historian is not *unqualifiedly* true, at least not in its application to the present article, as the sequel will show.

anxiety of the candidates for Olympic fame; and frequented, in later times, by sophists and philosophers, who were fond to contemplate wisdom, and communicate knowledge, in those delightful retreats.

The order of the athletic exercises or combats, was established by Lycurgus, and corresponded almost exactly to that described by Homer, in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, and the eighth of the Odyssey. Iphitus, we are told, appointed the other ceremonies and entertainments; settled the regular return of the festival at the end of every fourth year, in the month of July; and gave to the whole solemnity that form and arrangement, which it preserved with little variation, above a thousand years; a period exceeding the duration of the most famous kingdoms and republics of antiquity."

The care and superintendence of the games were intrusted to the people of Elis till they were excluded by the Pisæans, after the destruction of Pisa, in the year preceding the birth of Christ, three hundred and sixty-four. The presidents of the games were obliged solemnly to swear, that they would act impartially, and not take any bribes, or discover why they rejected some of the combatants. They generally sat naked, and, according to some authors, held before them the crown which was prepared for the conqueror, who was likewise in a state of nudity. Certain officers called *Alutai*, were appointed to keep order and enforce propriety of behavior during the celebration. Though the rule was sometimes neglected, *ordinarily* women were not permitted to appear amid the scenes of the Olympic festival.

The preparations for the athletic sports were great, and demanded a long season of probation. No person was allowed to enter the lists if he had not regularly exercised himself ten months before the celebration, at the public gymnasium of Elis, already mentioned. The wrestlers were appointed by lot. The gymnastic exercises, exhibited in these games, and which consisted in running, leaping, wrestling, boxing, and the throwing of the quoit, collectively bore the name of *Pentathlon* or *Quinquertium*. The leapers performed to the sound of flutes playing Pythian airs. "These gymnastic exercises," writes Smith, in his *Festivals, Games, and Amusements*, "being the most ancient, took precedence of the horse and chariot-races, though the competitors in the latter were, generally speaking, men of higher rank and consideration than the athletæ, and the spectacle was much more pompous and magnificent."

Beside the gymnastic exercises, and the horse and chariot-races, poetry, eloquence, and the fine arts, also entered the lists for Olympic renown, enhancing the interest of the occasion, and conferring glory upon talent.

A closer insight into the nature of the ceremonies and modes of proceeding observed at this celebrated festival, must necessarily be interesting, and I therefore add the following communication upon the subject, from the author just quoted:—

"The Olympic course was divided into two parts, the stadium and the hippodromus; the former of which was an elevated open causeway, six hundred feet long, being appropriated to the foot-



racés, and most of the combats; while the latter was reserved for chariot and horse-races. Pausanius has transmitted to us an accurate description of both, particularly of the hippodromus; but instead of a detail which would be little interesting to the general reader, we prefer copying the following animated picture of the scene exhibited at Olympia on the morning when the games were opened: 'At the first dawn of day we repaired to the stadium, which was already filled with *athletæ*, exercising themselves in preparatory skirmishes, and surrounded by multitudes of spectators; while others in still greater numbers were stationing themselves confusedly on a hill, in form of an amphitheatre, above the course. Chariots were flying over the plain; on all sides were heard the sound of trumpets and the neighing of horses, mingled with the shouts of the multitude. But when we were able to divert our eyes for a moment from this spectacle, and to contrast with the tumultuous agitations of the public joy the repose and silence of nature, how delightful were the impressions we experienced from the serenity of the sky, the delightful coolness of the air from the Alpheus, which here forms a magnificent canal, and the fertile fields, illumined and embellished by the first rays of the sun.'\* The candidates, having undergone an examination, and proved to the satisfaction of the judges that they were freemen, that they were Grecians by birth, and that they were clear from all infamous immoral stains, were led to the statue of Jupiter within the senate-house. This

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\* Anacharsis, chap. 38.



image, says Pausanius, was better calculated than any other to strike terror into wicked men, for he was represented with thunder in both hands; and, as if that were not a sufficient intimation of the wrath of the deity against those who should forswear themselves, at his feet there was a plate of brass containing terrible denunciations against the perjured. Before this statue the candidates, their relations, and instructors, swore on the bleeding limbs of the victims, that they were duly qualified to engage, solemnly vowing not to employ any unfair means, but to observe all the laws relating to the Olympic games. After this they returned to the stadium, and took their stations by lot, when the herald demanded—‘Can any one reproach these *athletæ* with having been in bonds, or with leading an irregular life?’ A profound silence generally followed this interrogatory, and the combatants became exalted in the estimation of the assembly, not only by this universal testimony of their moral character, but by the consideration that they were the free unsullied champions of the respective States to which they belonged; not engaged in any vulgar struggle for interested or ordinary objects, but incited to competition by a noble love of fame, and a desire to uphold the renown of their native cities in the presence of assembled Greece. Such being the qualities required before they could enter the lists, their friends, filled with anxiety, gathered round them, stimulating their exertions, or affording them advice, until the moment arrived when the trumpet sounded. At this signal the runners started off amid the cries and clamor of the excited multi-

tude, whose vociferations did not cease until the herald procured silence by his trumpet, and proclaimed the name and abode of the winner.

“On the last day of the festival, the conquerors, being summoned by proclamation to the tribunal within the sacred grove, received the honor of public coronation, a ceremony preceded by pompous sacrifices. Encircled with the olive wreath, gathered from the sacred tree behind the temple of Jupiter, the victors, dressed in rich habits, bearing palm-branches in their hands and almost intoxicated with joy, proceeded in grand procession to the theatre, marching to the sound of flutes, and surrounded by an immense multitude who made the air ring with their acclamations. The winners in the horse and chariot-races formed a part of the pomp, their stately coursers bedecked with flowers, seeming, as they paced proudly along, to be conscious participators of the triumph. When they reached the theatre, the choruses saluted them with the ancient hymn, composed by the poet Archilochus, to exalt the glory of the victors, the surrounding multitude joining their voices to those of the musicians. This being concluded, the trumpet sounded, the herald proclaimed the name and country of the victor, as well as the nature of his prize, the acclamations of the people within and without the building were redoubled, and flowers and garlands were showered from all sides upon the happy conqueror, who at this moment was thought to have attained the loftiest pinnacle of human glory and felicity.” Though the only guerdon that the victor received, was an olive-crown, yet this trifling mark of distinction powerfully stimu-

lated the acquisition of virtue, while it facilitated the cultivation of the mind, and, to souls animated by a noble ambition, it possessed an incomparably higher value, and was coveted with far more intensity, than the most unbounded treasures.\*

The statues of the conquerors, called Olympionicæ, were erected at Olympia, in the *Allis*, or sacred grove of Jupiter. The return of the successful candidates of fame, from the late scene of their trials and their skill, was not unlike the triumphal processions of the warrior-chieftains of antiquity: they rode in a chariot drawn by four horses, and everywhere they were received with acclamations and the most profound respect. Painters and poets were employed in celebrating their names, and transmitting the memory of their deeds to posterity. The celebrity of this festival drew together not only the inhabitants of Greece, but also those of the neighboring islands and continents; and the Olympiad served as a common bond of alliance, and point of reunion to the entire Hellenic race. The name of Hercules having been introduced among the founders of the Olympic games, it is necessary to trace the nature and import of this myth, and so to illustrate the design and character of those games as shall enable us properly to understand and justly to appreciate them. The reputed ancestor of Hercules,

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\* According to the popular belief of the Greeks, Hercules, whom poets and romancers had converted into a hero, claimed no higher reward for his beneficent labors among mankind than the simple olive-crown, and hence this revered token of merit became the prize of Olympic renown.

Perseus the shining, already enjoyed distinguished honors as a wrestler, at Chemmis, in Upper Egypt. There he could boast to have a temple and statue; and there gymnastic games commemorated his name and his exploits. It is confidently asserted that he graciously condescended to honor the city of his celestial progenitors, by occasionally appearing in his temple, when his zealous votaries had the singular good fortune to find one of his enormous sandals, measuring two cubits in length — the indubitable pledge of a fruitful year! These opportune and most auspicious epiphanies of the resplendent god, the devout Chemmisites gratefully acknowledged in the observance of athletic exercises and feats of agility, instituted, it is affirmed, by Perseus himself, and intended to be commemorative of annual, agrarian blessings.\* Of Hercules the Perseide, the Egyp-

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\* Herodotus, speaking of Perseus, calls him a *hero*, though his description of him answers mainly to that of a god, as we have already had occasion to prove him to be. His words, embracing and illustrating the theme discussed in the text, are these: "Chemmis is a place of considerable note in the Thebaid; it is near Neapolis, and remarkable for a temple of Perseus, the son of Danaë. This temple is of a square figure, and surrounded with palm-trees. The vestibule, which is very spacious, is constructed of stone, and on the summit are placed two large marble statues. Within the consecrated inclosure stand the shrine and statue of Perseus; who, as the inhabitants affirm, often appears in the country and the temple. They sometimes find one of his sandals, which are of the length of two cubits; and whenever this happens, fertility reigns throughout Egypt. Public games, after the manner of the Greeks, are celebrated in his honor. On this occasion they have every variety of gymnastic exercise. The rewards of the conquerors are cattle, vests, and skins. I was once induced

tian priests of Thebes related an anecdote to Herodotus, which, though apparently so trivial and destitute of dignity in its detail, is replete with profound astronomical significance. It happened on a certain occasion, it appears, that Hercules was seized with an irrepressible desire to see the person of Jupiter Ammon — *Amaun*. It was in vain that the god, for a long time, resisted his unwonted importunities: they continued to be repeated with renewed energy and increasing vehemence. Obligated at last to yield, Jupiter killed a ram; flayed it; wrapped his body into his hide; cut off his head, and placed it upon his own; and thus disguised, presented himself to the anxious gaze of his eager curiosity. Owing to this strange incident, the Egyptian statues of Jupiter represented the god with the head of a ram; and such was the veneration of the Thebans for this animal, that, with the exception of the anniversary festival of Jupiter, they never put one to death. "On

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to inquire why Perseus made his appearance to them alone, and why they were distinguished from the rest of Egypt by the celebration of gymnastic exercises? They informed me, in return, that Perseus was a native of their country; as were also Danaus and Lynceus, who made a voyage into Greece, and from whom, in regular succession, they related how Perseus was descended. This hero visited Egypt for the purpose, as the Greeks also affirm, of carrying from Africa the gorgon's head. Happening to come among them, he saw and was known to his relations. The name of Chemmis he had previously known from his mother, and himself instituted the games which they continued to celebrate."\* In this statement — substantially true, we find Perseus travestied into a hero, and *vice versa*; instead of the life and exploits of the god, corrupted and misrepresented by tradition and fiction.

\* Beloe.



this solemnity," writes the Father of History, "they kill a ram, and placing its skin on the image of the god, they introduce before it a figure of Hercules; the assembly afterwards beat the ram, and conclude the ceremony by inclosing the body in a sacred chest." All these coincidences are indicative of a vernal festival observed at Thebes. Jupiter-Ammon, or the sun in the zodiacal sign of the *ram*, opened the Egyptian year, and proclaimed the beginning of a new cycle of time.\* Sem-Hercules was the immediate offspring of the sun-god Jupiter-Ammon, and the vernal sun in its full development. Hence the ram was symbolical both of Jupiter the father and Hercules the son. This mutual relation of affinity of the two gods, or rather of the two persons of the one god, was astronomically expressed by the Egyptians, as may be still seen from the Bembinic Isis-tablet, the series of the hieroglyphical devices of which commence with the ram, at the side of which stands a youth, bearing a lance in one hand, and a bird which he tenders to the *Ovilline* beast, in the other: it is Hercules, appearing in the presence of Zeus, or Jupiter-Ammon, and gazing at the aries-god, his illustrious sire. The bird in his hand, is the undying Phœnix, the pregnant symbol of the *great year* of the Egyptians, the return of which was suggested by every recurrent anniversary or annual solar cycle; and therefore it was with admirable

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\* From these facts it appears that already, at that period of the world, the retrograde motion of the equinoxes had given Aries instead of Taurus, as had formerly been the case, to the rising year.



propriety that it was placed into the puissant hand of Sem, the god of mature spring, full of life and vigor. In the category of evolutions of the Egyptian deities, Sem-Hercules was ranked among the second order of the twelve great gods of the people of the Nile, and constituted, in the opinion of some eminent mythologists, the *thirteenth*, being the transition-state or connecting link between the past and future evolutions of Sol — the solar year deified and impersonated according to the twelve signs of the zodiac, now father, then son; now living, then dead! There was an Egyptian and a Grecian Hercules; the former was the *god*, the latter, the *demi-god* and *hero*, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, or, as others affirm of Jupiter and Danæ, the daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos.\* Of the Hercules whose divinity is unsullied by foreign admixture, Herodotus thus expresses himself: "Hercules is certainly one of the most ancient deities of Egypt; and, as they themselves affirm, is one of the twelve who were produced from the eight gods, seventeen thousand years before the reign of Amasis." Of the Grecian Hercules, the date of whose existence did not begin till five hundred years after the arrival of the patriarch Jacob in Egypt, he declares that in no part of that country, he was able to procure the least knowledge. Kings and heroes, both in Egypt and other countries, especially Greece, hesitated not to perpetuate their

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\* The ancient Egyptians, at least while the normal condition of their faith remained unimpaired, were never guilty of the folly of postulating the *apotheosis of a human being: anthropolatry*, implying the recognition of divinity, was therefore unknown among them.

fame under the name and attributes of Hercules ; and the noble deeds and daring adventures, which they actually performed, or which fiction and obsequious flattery created for them, were boldly or credulously ascribed by the future historian to the spurious Hercules, the supposititious god-man of poets and fabulists. Such are the data upon which the existence of the genuine historic Hercules, the divine son and true god, is based. Hercules, the potent god, was the great and indefatigable wrestler in the zodiacal path, and it was for this reason that the reflecting and devout Egyptians recognized and adored in him the power of God, manifested in the triumphant and glorious ascension of the vernal sun in its northern orbit, after a successful conquest of the long night of winter, and those meteoric and tellurian influences which are so repugnant to organic life. Governed by considerations like these, Sem, the gallant vanquisher of the pernicious powers of the earth and air, which prevail during a Boreal reign — the rebellious frost-giants of the Scandinavians, and oppose themselves to the benignant displays of the solar rays, is *now* placed beside the silent, limping Harpocrates — the sun in *Pisces*, struggling between winter and spring, with the chances of life and death almost equally balanced, and *then*, in juxtaposition with Jupiter-Ammon, — the growing sun, shining, however, with the feebleness of a still nascent light, while he himself is already clothed in the habiliments of resplendent solar power.\* The sun having once attained the culmi-

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\* The son, we see here, is greater than the father : just as the solar rays are more direct and intense in Taurus than in Aries.

nating point at the vernal equinox, the coming year is guarantied. Hence Sem-Hercules is the sun *par excellence*, and throughout its ecliptic revolution; and hence, too, he is the brave gymnastic hero running through all the stadia of the zodiacal course — the mighty and victorious wrestler with all the zodiacal beasts. In short, he is the ever combating, ever conquering, and never dying power in nature; and therefore he bears in his hand the wonderful Phoenix, the emblem and pledge of eternal victory, and of the infallible unfolding and recurrence of the *great year* of solar time. From what has been said, it will be apparent how the name of Hercules came to be associated with that of the founders of the Olympic games; nay, why he had almost necessarily to be regarded, in an age of tradition and allegory, as the illustrious author of that famous institution, the soul and aim of which were a wrestling and vanquishing — the reflex symbols of the zodiacal labors or solar struggles and triumphs of the god of the *knotted club*, enacted and realized in a grand drama of histrionic display. Hercules was the worthy successor as well as the brilliant offspring of Perseus, and Hercules, the son of the sun, was his name. He followed resolutely and nobly in the path of light and glory first marked out by his illustrious sire, Perseus of Chemmis, and the magnificent synonyme of Jupiter, Mithras, Ormuzd, etc. It was, as has been already stated, in the ancient city of Chemmis, the native or adopted town of the Persean gods, according to Egyptian mythology, where the devout and grateful inhabitants celebrated an annual festival in honor of Perseus, the god of solar light and of the year — games

commemorative of agrarian blessings and social prosperity, at the season of the year when Hercules his great son, considered as the sun in *Leo*, had attained in his solar course, the extreme limits of the northern tropics; and when accordingly the fully developed and *adult* sun had matured the golden harvests of the earth.

As to King Pelops, his Olympic fame owes its origin to the circumstance, that he reigned at Olympia under the powerful protectorate of Jupiter, from whose hand he had obtained the regal sceptre, and with it, the sanction of regal rights and supreme authority; and who, if the history of a fabulous era may be credited, not only assisted at the institution or revival of the Olympic games, but also conquered Oenomaus, king of Pisa, in a chariot-race, and received his daughter, the fair Hippodamia, as the prize of his victory.

If, on the one hand, we contemplate the Olympic games in their astronomical origin and legitimate import, and, on the other, base our reflections parenthetically upon the mythic account of their institution, it follows that the olive-crown was awarded to the successful combatants in the games, as the worthy successors and faithful imitators of their heavenly or heaven-sustained founders: as the chivalrous and noble brothers of Hercules and Pelops, and the brave and glorious sons of Jupiter, who, according to the Greeks, was the first great wrestler with the gloomy, boreal powers of the earth and the adverse atmospheric agents, the Titans and giants of the mythists and poets; the first wrestler at Olympia, where, tradition affirms, he once contended with

Hercules the renowned demi-god; the first and heavenly *Hellanodike*,\* and divine symbol of the triumph of all that is great or good, true or lovely, in the universe. In honor of him, the Olympic games were instituted; and in honor of him, as well as with the laudable view to stimulate and expand the religious sentiments of awe, veneration, and devotion, and impress the human mind with a profound sense of its dependence upon a Supreme Being, Phidias wrought the famous colossal statue of Jupiter, considered as the Pater-Deus, — the lord of creation, and the father of gods and men. This superb and wonderful production of ancient art stood in the temple of Jupiter, erected in the *Allis*, or sacred grove at Olympia, the central point of the pan-Hellenic festival, and the grand centripetal source of quadrennial attraction, emulation, and glory, to the elite of the entire Hellenic race.

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\* The Hellanodics — *Ellanodikai*, were the judges who had the entire direction of every thing appertaining to the Olympic festival. They bore the usual ensigns of magistracy, and were clothed in purple robes: they were the immediate representatives of the Elean people in the *Olympia*.

## DIVISION IV.

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### THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES.

THE Eleusinian mysteries derived their adjective appellation from Eleusis, a town in Attica, where they were celebrated with solemn pomp and typic rites. The era of their institution can no longer be determined by the historian, but their reorganization and enlargement by Eumolpus, the son of Poseidon, and king of Thrace, date about fourteen centuries anterior to the birth of Christ, and are coeval with the reign of Erechtheus, the son of Pandion, and sixth king of Athens. They were divided into *ta megala* and *ta mikra*, or the greater and the lesser. The latter were of an elementary character, and introductory to the former. Though the contrary has been asserted, a critical examination of the subject leaves no doubt that both were *annual* festivals. The greater Eleusiniâ were observed in the autumn, the lesser in the early spring, with an interval of at least six months. They were emphatically agrarian festivals, in which the introduction of agriculture and the cereal grains among mankind, and the varied and important blessings which they confer upon individuals and society, were gratefully commem-



orated. The autumnal mysteries were dedicated to Ceres, the vernal, to her daughter Proserpine, which is only another name for Ceres, considered as the earth in its rejuvenescence.\* Bacchus also played a conspicuous part in both mysteries, but especially in the lesser, between which and the *Attic-Bacchus* mysteries there were some strong points of resemblance. Upon a sarcophagus, among other hieroglyphical representations, appertaining to the cerealic class of mythological ideas, appear Dionysus and Demeter,—the same as Bacchus and Ceres; the former reclining upon the shoulders of the latter. Mounted upon a car, drawn by two steeds, stands Proserpine, renovated nature, and the Hora of the summer season, extending her fair hand to the *jolly god*, guides the spirited team of the benignant goddess over the earth, strewn with garlands of grape-leaves. In a grove, between Sicyon and Phlius, called Pyræa, distinguished by a sanctuary of Demeter-Prostasia and Korē, there might be seen three statues in close proximity, bearing the faces of Bacchus and the goddesses just mentioned. Besides, these three divinities had a temple in common at Rome, near the *circus maximus*.

The lesser mysteries were celebrated at a place in Attica, known as Agra or Agræ, situated upon one of the banks of the Ilissus, and distant from Athens between two and three stadia. Rigid fasts preceded

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\* In his work on the "Nature of the Gods," Cicero thus etymologically defines the name of Ceres: "Ceres dicitur quasi a Gerendis fructibus: aut quasi Serens, vel ab antiquo verbo Cereo, quod idem est ac Creo, quod cunctarum frugum creatrix sit et alatrix."

the solemnities. They were succeeded by purifications in the *Ilissus*, which demanded the superintendence of the *Hydranus*, assisted by the *Daduch*. The lustral ceremonies being performed, the novice was required to place his feet upon the skins of the victims which had been offered to Jupiter-*Milichius*, and Jupiter-*Ctesius*, after which the *Mystagogue* administered to him the oath, which obliged him to observe inviolable secrecy on all subjects connected with the mysteries. The initiation being thus far accomplished, the *mystes* pronounced the following sacred formula: "I have drunk the meslin-drink — *Kukeōn*; I have taken the goblet from the shrine, and, according to custom, put it in the flasket, and thence back again into the shrine."\*

Any one, as may readily be supposed, could not be admitted into the mysteries. A barbarian, unless adopted by a Greek, whatever his merits might be, was inevitably excluded from the eminent distinction, and in the archonate of Euclides, slaves were not even permitted to *enter* the temple of Ceres. Not only murderers, but likewise all those who had committed manslaughter, however guiltless they might be of any criminal design, forfeited for ever all claims to so hallowed a privilege. A blameless life, a legitimate birth, and the enjoyment of all the rights and prerogatives of a freeman, were absolutely necessary to a participation of the sacred mysteries. Even claims as fair and well founded as these were required first to be sanctified by the blood of bulls

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\* Silvestre de Sacy thinks this formula constituted the pass or watchword of the *mystai*.

and swine, before they could procure an entrance for their possessor into the coveted institution. This scrupulous precaution in the admission of members is easily accounted for, when we reflect that the governing idea which pervaded the entire Cerealic religion, was that of peace and war; or, in other words, the war of matter with spirit, and the purification of the former by the latter; in short, it was the dogma of strife and reconciliation. For, according to the theological system of the heathens, the universe, considered as an existence or reality out of God, is a secession or apostasy, and constitutes the *duality* or *dyas* of being. Hence, as the evil can only be remedied by a restitution or reunion, therefore all things must ultimately again return to God.

The members of the lesser mysteries were designated as the *Mystai*—the initiated,—though this term was also employed less definitely, or had a more extensive import; those of the greater, as the *Epóptai*, and sometimes as the *Ephoroi*, both names signifying *seers* or *eye-witnesses*. The title of *Teletai* likewise denoted a grade in these mysteries, but whether it implied *perfection* attained by the *Mystai*,\* or had reference to the *end* of their former unconsecrated lives, cannot now be determined. From a passage in Silvestre de Sacy's "Researches into the Mysteries of Paganism," taken from the "Commentary of Olympiodorus on Plato's Phædon," it appears that the Eleusinia recognized five degrees

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\* In speaking of the initiated of both mysteries, in the course of this article, I shall employ *Mystes* as the singular, and *Mystai* as the plural.

of rank among the initiated, of which the two first were confined to purifications ; the third, to the preparatory ceremonies ; the fourth comprised the formal admission into the lesser mysteries, and conferred the name of *Mystes* upon the initiated ; and the fifth, which consisted in the *Epoptia* or *Epoptic* state, and which\*the greater mysteries alone could confer. The lapsed were doomed to pass through five stages of trial and penance, before they could hope to be restored to their former rank.

The ancients attached the highest importance to mysteries, and especially to the Eleusinian. A statement of Isocrates, contained in his "Panegyricus," may suffice to illustrate this truth : "When," says he, "after the abduction of her daughter *Korē*, or *Proserpine*, having wandered over the whole earth in search of her, *Demeter* arrived in our country, *Attica*, and felt anxious to express her obligations towards our ancestors, on account of certain favors which they had conferred upon her, she made them the recipients of the two greatest blessings which mortals can obtain from the gods, — *agriculture*, to which we are indebted that we need not live like brutes, and the *mysteries*, which fill the souls of those who participate in them with the sweetest hopes both in this and the future world.\* Hence, in not confining these invaluable boons within their own narrow limits, but by disseminating them among the rest of mankind, the Athenians have proved themselves the

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\* *Demeter* is the Greek name for *Ceres*, who again is synonymous with the Egyptian *Isis*, the German *Hertha*, etc.

most devoted friends and ardent admirers of the munificent goddess."

The delight with which the ancients celebrated the mysteries was proverbial, as the following sentence attests : "*Oudeis muoumenos oduretai*;" that is, *nemo in mysteriis tristis* : in the mysteries, no one is sad ! One of the causes of this predilection for the mysteries is revealed in the popular creed of the heathen religion, that as the uninitiated must continue to exist in the mire of matter, so they could expect only a sad end ; while the Mystai—as we learn from Hemsterhuis "On the Dialogues of Lucian"—would enjoy distinguished honor—*proedria*, in the spirit-world. That the introduction of agriculture and the cereal grains into Greece and other countries ; the elucidation of physical theology or the deified personifications of Nature, formed prominent themes of contemplation, reminiscences, and instruction among the Epoptai, is to be taken for granted, as the Eleusinia were sacred to Ceres, a name whose comprehensive import included all those elements and agents in the external world, which so essentially contribute towards agrarian prosperity.

Having advanced the doctrine—which is both mythologically and historically true—that Egypt was the cradle of the Eleusinian mysteries, Silvestre de Sacy adds that the typical representations in the mysteries contained nothing, as far as physical nature is concerned, but symbols of the main operations of the natural world, or, to use his own language, "*Principales operations de la nature.*" In the greater mysteries at least, agreeably to the general tenor of the moral theology of the heathens, piety



and virtue, rewards and punishments, likewise constituted leading subjects of profound investigation and earnest reflection. The significant symbol of purity, life, and happiness, among the ancients, especially in the ample creed of the mysteries, was *water*. Hermes, the Egyptian Mercury, and the first and greatest Mystagogos of all mysteries, bore a drink-offering cup in his hand, as the emblem of his holy profession. The mummy, wrapped up in its chrysalis folds, and clutching a water jug, patiently and hopefully awaited a blissful resurrection. Upon the mummy covers in the catacombs of Egypt, appeared the consolatory apophthegm, "The cool water Osiris will give." Aquarius, one of the winter or northern signs of the zodiac, holds a water jug, to denote that he is the conductor of the souls out of this into a higher and better world.

The following remarkable passage from the *Gorgias* of Plato, so well calculated to illustrate this train of ideas, we quote from the edition of Heindorf. The *Athenian bee* first calls attention to the doctrine according to which life was regarded as wretched and a state of death, our bodies as real graves, and death as true life. After these remarks, he proceeds to notice the emblematical import of the water cask, and then adds: "Hence in the spirit-world — *adou*, the excluded or uninitiated — *amuetoî*, will be most unhappy, and doomed to carry water into a leaky cask — *eis ton tetrēmenon pithon*, in a sieve — *koskinō*, just as leaky."

The ethical connection of water with the actions and the fate of mankind, will further appear from the subjoined myth. Of the fifty daughters of Denaus,



king of Argos, forty-eight—who were all equally guilty of the atrocious crime of having murdered their Egyptian husbands on the first night of their nuptials—were condemned in Hades to fill a vessel full of holes, the water escaping through it as fast as it was put in. Hence their labor was infinite, and their punishment eternal! Two of the daughters—some authors mention only one, thus augmenting the number of the delinquent sisters and treacherous wives—Hypermnestra and Amynone, preserved their innocence, while they proved true to their marital vow, and became renowned as the discoverers of fountains in Argos, and the munificent dispensers of water to its sandy, arid soil. Amynone has even immortalized her name as the fair foundress of the Thesmaphorian mysteries. Mysteries and water; water, virtue, and happiness; and no water, vice, and misery, were, in that remote age of the world, correlative terms. A *drop* of water, according to Christ, would have been unutterable bliss to the voluptuous *Dives* in torment. What is life? what agrarian pursuit without water? Its absence is hell; with its presence there *may be* heaven!

The doctrines taught in the Eleusinian mysteries were clearly based upon the Cerealic laws; for the Cerealic institutions in Attica, and other countries, were emphatically Thesmaphorian; that is, festivals sacred to Ceres, who first invited the attention of mankind to the cultivation of the soil, and the use of the grains and fruits of the earth. Hence one of the honorable surnames of the beneficent goddess is *Thesmophora*, in allusion to this circumstance; for the name is derived from *thesmōn* and *phorai*, to

bring or carry the laws,—*legifera*. Through the typical traditions of a primeval age, represented in mystic scenes, the prominent cosmic agencies, placed in juxtaposition with the salient productions of their creative energies, were brought into proximity with human vision, and man beheld the demiurgus, Jupiter, with the sun and moon, and the embodied word of wisdom, Hermes; Ceres, the absent, under the name of Korē, the maiden or daughter, also called Proserpine: the earth in the winter season; and Ceres, the present, distinguished as the recovered Korē, or the maiden Proserpine: the earth in its restored organic life and vigor; the metempsychosis and purification of the soul; the lower regions with Pluto and Proserpine; Triptolemus, Iasion, Androgeus, Theseus, and all the great kings, planters, and terra-cultors of Attica, together with the symbolical display of the time and manner in which these civilizers and benefactors of the human race introduced into their country, from distant lands, the cereal grains, the *hortulan* fruits, and agrarian pursuits and laws, or were instrumental in disseminating the knowledge and use of them among the rest of mankind. From such scenic representations, interpreted through the media of tradition and mystic symbols, the most important theological doctrines were deduced and communicated to the studious Epoptai; especially were the dogmas of a Supreme Being, the originator and controller of the universe, and the perfectible nature and exalted destination of man, earnestly impressed upon their attention. From these premises it necessarily followed that the momentous truths involved in the faith in a palingenesia and immor-

tality of the soul, formed a principal feature in the scholastic course of the Attic mysteries: a doctrine which obtained its origin, or at least its confirmation, in the attentive study of the seed-grain in its various stages of decay and development, from the time that it is buried in the soil till its frugiferous maturity. This striking and interesting physical phenomenon the Saviour of the world has hallowed as the symbol and pledge of the same paramount and consoling truth.\*

Leland, the author of "The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation," etc., speaking of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as it was taught in the mysteries, expresses the opinion that "A future state was not taught there in grave and serious discourses, so as to instruct the people to form proper notions concerning it, but by shows and representations which might strike the senses, and make some present impression on the imagination, but were not fitted to enlighten the understanding, and produce a real and lasting conviction in the mind." This opinion the learned doctor founds upon the denial of that article of faith by some of the later Athenians; upon the declaration of Cebes, one of Socrates's disciples, who told his master that the doctrine he taught concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state, "met with little credit among men;" and upon the fact that Socrates himself made the statement *that his doctrine was not believed by the generality*, etc., I will only add, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is taught in the Christian

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\* John, twelfth chapter and twenty-fourth verse.

church without "representations and shows," and "in grave and serious discourses," and that—I make the assertion with profound grief—notwithstanding this contrariety in teaching, the unbelievers in this doctrine number legions!

The time which elapsed before the initiated into the lesser mysteries could be received into the greater, has been variously estimated from a period of six months to that of a year, and even to that of five years. Father Petau advocates the first; Plutarch, the second; and Scaliger, the third. The greater Eleusinian festival opened on the fifteenth of the month Boëdromion, which, according to the discrepant theory of different authors, corresponded either to September or November. "But," observes Gillies, "as the Attic year was *lunar*, the months of that year could not exactly correspond to those of ours. In the computation of their months, the Greeks agreed not with other nations, nor even among themselves." On the first day of the festival, the initiates of the lesser mysteries assembled and took the necessary measures for their admission into the greater: it was the day of preparation. The second day borrowed its name from the hortatory phrase *Alade Mystai*—to the sea, ye initiated; for on this day the initiated or *Mystai* marched in procession to the Saronic gulf, or at least to one of its inlets. On account of its saline properties, sea-water was deemed among the ancients to be especially efficacious in the cure of physical maladies, and the washing and bathing in it from religious motives was therefore typical of moral purity. The third day was fast-day, and it was spent in a total absti-

nence from all sensual enjoyments. It was observed in commemoration of the sorrow of the goddess Ceres, on account of the abduction of her daughter, fondly denominated Korē, the maiden, but commonly known as Proserpine, by the enamoured and inexorable Pluto. As an offering was made to Ceres and Proserpine during the festival, the presumption is that the fourth day of the celebration was dedicated to this solemnity. The fifth day was called the *Lampadōn Hemera*, the day of torches; thus distinguished because on it the initiated went two and two in procession, each bearing a torch in his hand, into the temple of Ceres at Eleusis, the Daduch, with a torch the size of which corresponded to his superior dignity, leading the way. The torches were passed from hand to hand, and the smoke and flames which issued from them were considered to possess a purifying virtue. Their introduction into the mysteries is ascribed by mythology to the circumstance that Ceres, while perambulating the whole earth in search of her lost child, illumined her wearisome path with torchlight. Iacchus, the son and ward of Ceres, and one of the surnames of Bacchus, gave appellative distinction to the sixth and most solemn day of the festival. On this emphatically jubilant day, young Iacchus, thus named from *iachein*—the same as *clamare* in Latin, in allusion to the shouts which the votaries of Bacchus raised at the festival of their god, being crowned with a myrtle-wreath, was carried from the Ceramicus, a public walk at Athens, to Eleusis. The initiated, likewise crowned with myrtle and displaying the usual Bacchus symbols—the thyrsus, ivy leaves, etc., followed the youthful deity in solemn



procession. The frequent exclamations of Iacchus, or rather Iacchos, and the chanting of pæans, still farther distinguished this procession from that of the torches, at once so stately and so taciturn. Iacchus had a temple at Athens, which bore his name, and was called *Iaccheion*; he was worshipped as the mediator between Ceres and her votaries, and hence his frequent invocation by the initiated on this occasion.\* On the seventh day the initiated returned to Athens by the *sacred road*, a distance of ten miles, stopping at various places rendered sacred by tradition, or significant from their connection with religion; as, at the site where the first fig-tree grew, and hence called the *holy fig-tree*; at the bridge which spanned the river Cephissus, etc. At the latter place they were met by many of the people of the neighborhood, when both parties indulged towards each other in good-humored jests and raileries, and this mutual jocosity and alternate play of wit was denominated *Gephurismós* — the teasing at the bridge.

It may not be inappropriate to remark here, that the halt of the mystic procession at the bridge was, properly speaking, made in compliment of the river Cephissus, with a view to commemorate the practice

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\* Young Iacchus is the same as young Bacchus, and therefore Bacchus, properly so called, was his father, while Ceres claimed the relation of maternity to him. Hence, mythologically speaking, he is the joint offspring of Ceres — the earth or dry element, and of Bacchus — the wet, fluid constituents of the globe, and consequently the mediator between Ceres and her zealous worshippers, whose hope was based upon the bliss of *living waters* after this life, of which hope the water jug in the mysteries was the emblem.



of the ancient Phœnicians, from whom the Cerealic religion was partly derived, to place the images of their tutelar deities, Hercules, Melkarth, etc., upon rafts and boats on the water. According to Kanne, these Phœnician gods were the *Patachi*—the door-keepers and key-bearers of Hades, to which they conveyed the released souls of mortals upon Charon's boat. Religious ceremonies, symbolical of these facts, were no doubt also performed at the Attic bridge; yet history is silent or unsatisfactory upon the subject.

The eighth day bore the appellation of *Epidauria*, which appears to have been sacred to Æsculapius, the god of medicine and the symbol of the mature autumnal harvest, and to have borrowed its name from *Epidaurus*, a town in the north of Argolis, in Peloponnesus, chiefly dedicated to the hygienic god, who had a famous temple there. If mythic record can be relied upon, it once happened on this day that Æsculapius came too late to the festival, and had therefore to be initiated by a posteal or after-consecration. From this precedent, so encouraging to the dilatory, all late comers were permitted to enjoy the same unenviable privilege. In his Eleusinian connéctions with Ceres, Æsculapius is the same as Erisichthon, of whom mention has already been made: a fact which sufficiently accounts for his presence at the solemnities of the goddess.

*Plēmochōē* was the term which distinguished the ninth and last day of the Eleusinian solemnities. It owed its distinctive appellation to a tureen or flat-bottomed earthen vessel; for on this day two vessels answering to this description were filled with wine,

when the contents of the one was poured out towards the rising, and that of the other towards the setting sun. While the libation was offered, the initiated—as it appears from Proclus on Plato—looked alternately towards heaven and earth, as if they were there recognizing and adoring the father and mother of all things, pronouncing as they did so, the words *Uie Tokuie*.

The final and most solemn consecration, the *Epopteia*, which was performed in the vestibule or outer court of the temple of Ceres, is generally believed to have taken place in the night of the sixth day of the festival. On this momentous and thrilling occasion, the Hieroceryx commanded the profane to withdraw. The oath prescribed to the initiated was again administered to them, and their assent to the mystic formulas, to which they had already been obliged to subscribe in the lesser mysteries, probably repeated. Upon this the Mystai put on new suits of clothes,—the symbol of moral regeneration, over which a fawn skin, as the finishing grace in the mystic toilette, was thrown: it was emblematical of the beauty, the diversity, and the symmetry of creation. *Eudaimon* and *Olbios*—be happy, and the good demon accompany you, were the congratulatory expressions with which the honored and delighted Mystai were now saluted. These ceremonies being concluded, a profound darkness suddenly enshrouded the assembly; lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and unearthly noises resounded through the apartment, while monstrous forms appeared on all sides, filling the recent Mystai with horror and consternation,—all symbolical devices, indicative of

the primeval struggles of the Demiurgus with chaos, and of the disorder and confusion which prevail in the unimproved and unadorned state of the moral and physical world. The scene again suddenly shifted, and the affrighted Mystai, conducted by the Mystagogos, were introduced into the inner temple or sanctuary of Ceres, which was brilliantly illuminated, and where stood the statue of the goddess magnificently adorned, and refulgent with a preternatural splendor. This truly enchanting stage of the Eoptic career was denominated *Autopsia*, self-seeing; and the happy aspirant after mystic honors was rewarded with a myrtle crown. His eyes were dazzled with the intense glare of light that everywhere met his astonished gaze; sweet and enrapturing tones of harmony fell upon his delighted ears; and his soul, charmed by the magic influence of the *autopsial* state, was transported in the contemplation of the fairest forms and the loveliest scenery in nature: it was a foretaste of the anticipated union with the immortal gods; a cosmic drama, in which the Hierophant represented the demiurgus, Jupiter; the Daduch, the sun; the Epibomius, the moon; and the Hieroceryx, Hermes — the logos, or all-pervading spirit of the universe.\* At last the solemnities were

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\* Beside numerous priestesses and inferior priests, four chief priests figured preëminently in the sacred mysteries, of whom the Hierophant — a lineal descendant of the Eumolpus, who is also known as the *Mystagogos* and the *Prophētēs* — was the honored head, the *Pontifex Maximus* of Attica. The next in rank was the Daduch, the torch-bearer, whose duty it was, in conjunction with the Hierophant, to offer prayers and sing hymns to Ceres and Proserpine. Like his chief, he could boast of a diadem, but a

closed with the words *Kogx Ompax*, which in their elementary, syllabic form resolve themselves into the tripartite sentence of *Kogx*, *Om*, and *Pax*, and, according to Wilford on Jones's "Asiatic Researches," are synonymous with the Hindoo dismissal formula contained in the words *Cansha*, *Om*, and *Pacsha*, with which the Bramins are still in the habit of concluding their public worship. *Cansha* or *Canscha* denotes the object of supreme desire; *Om* (*Aum*) is the holy term by which the Supreme Being, *Parabrahma*, considered in his unrevealed, absolute state, is designated; and *Pacsha* means successively change, series, order, duty. Beside vocal and instrumental music, the greater Eleusinian mysteries were also celebrated with public shows and gymnastic exhibitions, which lasted several days; but of all the

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*throne* was the exclusive prerogative of the former. According to the import of his name, his functions required the *Epibomios* to officiate at the altar. These priests, in the order in which they have been described, represented the demiurgus or Jupiter, the sun and the moon, while the illustrious *Hieroceryx* typified *Hermes*, the active mundane intelligence, and coördinate counselor of the demiurgus. Purple robes and myrtle crowns were the badges which distinguished these high dignitaries in common. Among the inferior priests may be mentioned the *Hydranus*, who superintended the lustral ceremonies of the Eleusinian candidates; the *Spondophori*, who offered the libations; the *Pyrphori*, who carried the fire; the *Hieraules*, or sacred flutist; the *Iacchagogos*, or the conductor of the *Iacchus* procession, etc. All the priests, without distinction of name or rank, washed themselves with the juice of the hemlock—*Conium Maculatum*—to promote continence. The appellative title of the priestesses of *Ceres* and *Proserpine* was *Hierophantides*. Their lives and functions were subject to the supervision of a chief priestess, who administered the consecration rites to the initiated of her own sex.

spectacles which distinguished their festivities, the *Taurilia* or bull-fights were perhaps the most significant as well as interesting. I shall therefore make them the concluding theme of the Eleusinian investigations. They were celebrated at the close of the great Eleusinian festival, and, according to Aristides, the prize which was awarded to the successful combatants of this symbolical game, consisted in fruits of the earth; for Ceres, in whose honor the taurilia were exhibited, having introduced the knowledge of agriculture, her votaries aimed only to be rewarded with her gifts,—the means of their strength and agility in the tauro-machian contests; contests which were not maintained by men who had forfeited their lives, or observed for the gratification of a brutal pleasure, as was the case with the gladiatorial shows of the Romans, or whose object was to afford periodical amusement to the elite of the nation by the ruthless perpetration of deeds of blood and cruelty, as is the case with the *Fiesta de Toros*, or bull-fight of the Spanish people, but by virtuous and eminent citizens—the *Genestatoi*, as Artemidorus calls them—and for important religious purposes: *religionis causa*, says Levius. The taurilia were observed both on foot and on horseback, and the combatants might be either attired or naked. Of the method of coping on horseback with the taurian antagonists, some idea may be formed from Suetonius's life of the emperor Claudius, where the historian mentions mounted Thessalians *qui feros tauros ad terram cornibus detrahunt*. They who performed such feats were denominated *taurelates*, bull-lowerers, and *keraelkes*, horn-drawers. Similar scenes are represented



upon coins, vases, relievos, etc. There can be little doubt that the fables of the Minotaurs, Centaurs, and Hippo-Centaurs, had their origin in the gymnastic feats performed in the taurilia, which consisted now and then in bearing off a young beast upon the athletic shoulders of the stalwart tauro-machist; or upon those of his fiery steed. The beasts most generally employed in the labors of agriculture among the ancients, were those of the ox kind; and as Ceres was the adored foundress of agrarian pursuits, which required the aid of those useful animals, they had to be hunted down, tamed, and broken to the yoke; and one of the objects of the taurilia celebration was to commemorate these facts.

The Cerealic goddess deserved the most unbounded gratitude of her happy people, — the manly tillers of the soil, the planters and sowers of the cereal grains, and the enjoyers of rural abundance and social prosperity through her propitious influence. Hence they offered to her taurian victims; made libations to her of their blood, which they poured upon the earth, the prolific lap of the patron goddess; and burned their flesh, for a *sweet savor*, upon her numerous altars. Heaven may be justly regarded as the resplendent archetype of the Eleusinian taurilia; for in the glittering path of the ecliptic, the sons of Zeus, Perseus and Hercules, as also Cepheus, once king of sable Ethiopia, are, as they were in the remote ages of antiquity, puissant wrestlers with the zodiacal beasts, which they subdue and drive in triumph towards Ceres-Chthonia, or the earth,\* bring-

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\* They bring the northern and southern signs of the zodiac

ing heaven and earth in prolific union, and thus realize the conditions of every agrarian blessing. A herdsman, *Bootes*, is one of the northern constellations. A sagittarius, or archer, *Chiron*, one of the greatest heroes of the age in which he lived, and besides a centaur — partly man and partly bull — is likewise translated to the heavens, and when the sun enters his constellation, it is at that period in autumn when the chase was begun among the ancients: the season at which the taurilia were celebrated. Moreover, there is a southern constellation distinguished as the *Taurus*, the bull, which comprises a numerous herd of bovine cattle, in the two fields or clusters of stars, composed of the Hyades and the Pleiades. Near the feet of Taurus, Orion has assumed his zodiacal position, a god-descended giant, who boasted that there was not an animal upon the earth which he could not conquer, and who was indeed, like Nimrod, a *mighty hunter*; and in heaven, where he reigns as one of the brightest constellations in the solar orbit, he is still armed with belt and sword, combating with the beasts of the celestial *Chios*, taming wild nature like Ceres, and rendering heaven propitious to the happiness of mankind, as did the Cerealic goddess the plastic earth. Finally, Perseus and Hercules, the indomitable wrestlers in the solar sphere, take diligent care that the sun-god Taurus shall be ready to wield his sceptre over the northern hemisphere, at the precise moment when the vernal equinox may demand his refulgent presence, and

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continually under that solar influence which is most propitious to the earth.

Ceres shall have found her fair daughter Proserpine.

In closing these investigations, the author presumes to indulge the hope that the deities who figure in these pages may everywhere be treated with that deference which is justly due to beings of so divine a nature and illustrious a rank, and that the symbolical garniture in which their eventful lives and exalted functions are clothed, may reveal to the reader the unlimited care and impartial nature of the adorable providence which God displays towards mankind, irrespective of creed or name.

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